

The Making and Remaking of Gender Relations in Tanzanian Fiction

by

John Wakota

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Supervisor: Prof. Grace A. Musila

Co-supervisor: Prof. Shaun Viljoen

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Declaration

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April 2014

Dedication

To the memory of my late parents: Xavery and Akoba.

Abstract

This study examines the fictional representation of gender relations in novels set during five historical periods in Tanzania – the pre-colonial, colonial, nationalism, *Ujamaa*¹, and the current neoliberalism period – each of which is marked by important shifts in the nation's economic contours. Analysing novels written in both Swahili and English, it tracks the shifts in fictionalized household and extra-household gender relations; analyses how the community and the state (colonial and post-colonial) variously map and remap the way male and female characters relate; and interrogates how male and female characters variously accommodate, appropriate, bargain with and/or resist the shifts. The study employs the concepts of power and intersectionality to analyse how selected authors depict gender relations as a product of intersecting identity categories, complex socio-economic shifts and historical processes.

Defining labour as productive work done for wage and fulfilment of gender roles, the study argues that labour is one of the major aspects shaping power relations between men and women. It reveals that labour is the major aspect in which the economic shifts have had great impact on gender relations as represented in Tanzanian fiction. As an aspect of power, labour is also the area within which gender relations have continuously been negotiated and contested throughout the fictionalized history. In negotiating or resisting given economic shifts, both male and female characters variously deconstruct and or endorse existing notions of power, labour, and gender relations.

The study shows that the cross-fertilization among the periods, the interaction between gender and other identity categories (such as race, religion, class, and age), the synergy between indigenous patriarchy and other patriarchies (such as colonial and capitalist), and, the interactions between global and local dynamics account for the complex and contradictory nature of the shifts in gender relations throughout the nation's history. Consequently, the study's major observation is that across the fictionalized history, characters variously seek to maintain and or transform existing gender relations and or discard or restore past gender relations.

¹ Swahili for 'familyhood' and Tanzania's version of socialism.

Opsomming

Dié studie ondersoek die fiksionele verteenwoordiging van geslagsverhoudings in romans wat gestel word gedurende vyf historiese periodes in Tanzanië – pre-koloniale, koloniale, nasionalisties, *Ujamaa*² en die huidige neoliberalisme – elkeen waarvan gekenmerk is deur belangrike verskuiwings in die nasie se ekonomiese kontoere. Deur die analisering van romans wat in Engels en Swahili geskryf is volg dit die verskuiwings in fiktiewe huishouding- en ekstrahuishoudelike geslagsverhoudings; dit analiseer hoe die gemeenskap en die staat (koloniale en post-koloniale) die manier van hoe manlike en vroulike karakters verband hou verskillend en afwisselend kaart en herkaart; dit interrogeer hoe manlike en vroulike karakters verskillend die verskuiwings akkommodeer, bewillig en weerstaan. Die studie maak gebruik van die konsepte van krag en interseksionaliteit om te analiseer hoe die geselekteerde skrywers geslagsverhoudings verteenwoordig as 'n produk van kruisende identiteitskategorieë, komplekse sosio-ekonomiese verskuiwings en historiese prosesse.

Arbeid word as produktiewe werk wat gedoen word vir loon en geslagsrolle definieer, en die studie argumenteer dat arbeid een van die hoof aspekte is wat magsverhoudings bepaal tussen mans en vrouens. Dit onthul dat arbeid die hoof aspek is in die ekonomiese verskuiwings wat 'n groot impak gehad het in geslagsverhoudings in Tanzaniese fiksie. As 'n aspek van mag is dit ook die area waarin geslagsverhouding aanmekaar onderhandel en betwis word dwarsdeur die fiktiewe geskiedenis. Wanneer dit kom by die onderhandel en twis van ekonomiese verskuiwings is dit beide manlike en vroulike karakters wat afwisselend bestaande idees van mag, arbeid en geslagsverhoudings dekonstrueer en endosseer.

Die studie bewys dat kruisbestuiwing tussen die periodes, die interaksies tussen geslag en ander identiteitskategorieë (soos ras, geloof, klas en ouderdom), die sinergie tussen patriargie en ander patriargies (soos koloniale en kapitalistiese) en die interaksies tussen globale en plaaslike dinamika verantwoordelik is vir die komplekse en teenstrydige natuur van die wisselinge in geslagsverhoudings regdeur die nasie se geskiedenis. Gevolglik is die studie se hoofobservasie dat die karakters regdeur die geskiedenis op verskeie maniere poog om bestaande geslagsverhoudings te behou of te transformeer of om vorige geslagsverhoudings te herstel of verwyder.

² Swahili vir 'familieskap' en Tanzanië se weergawe van sosialisme.

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Chapter One: Tanzania: Socio-economic Shifts, Fiction, and Gender Relations

Introduction

In *Claiming History: Colonialism, Ethnography, and the Novel*, Eleni Coundouriotis makes a case for using fiction to record and study history. She notes that fictional narratives “lay claim to, and explain particular histories” (4). Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie, in *Recreating Ourselves: African Women and Critical Transformations*, makes a “literature for sociology” case. Her argument is that fiction “can be used for systematic study of society” (11). Elsewhere, the notion of “Literature as history” forms the central argument in *African Literature and African Historical Experience*, a collection of essays edited by Ikonne Chidi, Emelia Oko, and Peter Onwudinjo. One of the contributors to this volume, Aderemi Bamikunle, even proposes to approach fiction as a historical experience. Because of such a discernible relationship between fiction and society, Joan Rockwell claims that fiction “ought to be added to the regular tools of social investigation” (4). She maintains that the capacity of fiction as a tool for investigation lies in the fact that it gives us information about different institutions, customs, laws, and structures of society on the one hand, and the characters’ responses and attitudes to these institutions on the other. The point is that fiction “is not a textbook of history, but an imaginative reconstruction of history” (Coundouriotis 11). Therefore “it is not necessarily history, but it can be history” (Bamikunle 73).

This study uses the fictions that depict Tanzania’s key economic epochs to trace the portrayal of the society’s shifts in gender relations. Fiction is used in this study because compared to other genres, it is the most developed genre in Tanzania. Secondly, I have chosen to focus on fiction because of its dominance over other genres. In his seminal work *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, Hayden White delineates the relationship between narrative forms and history. He also explains the usefulness and convenience of fictional narratives in studying history. He claims that through fictional narratives “conflicting claims of the imaginary and the real are mediated, arbitrated, or resolved in a discourse” (5). Here White is suggesting that fictional narratives provide a better ground on which fictional truth and actual truth are brought face-to-face in discourse analysis. Drawing on from Mikhail Bakhtin’s *Dialogic Imagination* and *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, Gary Saul Morson and Carry Emrson argue that of all the genres, the novel is the

most suited for investigation of historical change including the psychology of human beings. This is because it is persuasive and allows for conversations between and among its different language varieties. They write:

The novel, like the self, is a highly complex combination and dialogue of various voices and ways of speaking, each incorporating a special sense of the World. The novel is the most dialogic genre [and] the best form for psychological investigation. (218)

Using the foregoing formulation, the study argues that when characters' psychology, attitudes, feelings and responses to different socio-economic structures and institutions are examined in what Rockwell refers to as the "nodal periods" (4) – "when great changes are taking place in the basic institutions of society" (4), the characters' reactions to the changes can be "used as prototypes of social roles and social attitudes" (4). This approach also borrows the lead that Chinua Achebe provides in his essay "The Truth of Fiction" in which among other things, he discusses his theory on the nature, functions and persuasive power of fiction. Prose fiction, he argues, produces a "self-encounter" called "imaginative identification" (144) which then produces to the reader a "heightened sense of reality" out of which we gain insights on how to "make our way in the real World" (151). In this study, the novels become a tool of investigating change in gender relations. The five nodal periods analysed in this study are pre-colonial, colonial, nationalist, *Ujamaa*, and neoliberalism in the socio-economic history of Tanzania.

The study reads the representations of the economic shifts from the pre-colonial to the contemporary era and their impacts on power relations between men and women. It argues that as the nation experienced different economic shifts, gender relations also continued to evolve. Labour, which is used in a dual sense, to mean productive work done for wage and fulfilment of gender roles is one of the areas on which such economic shifts have had great impact on the lives of the characters represented in the novels. It is also the aspect on which portrayed gender relations have been contested and reconstructed. The reading of the selected and epochs suggests that by introducing new relations of production and new socio-economic obligations and or expectations, the shifts invite new responses from the characters, resulting in the creation of new gender relations and the reshaping of characters' socio-economic identities.

In addition to mapping the representation of changes in gender relations as a result of the economic shifts, the study also interrogates the impact of the socio-economic shifts on the way writers represent gender issues. Simon Gikandi reminds us that analysing change and its implication should be a concern for a study of the East African fiction. The focus should be on how the shifts “have changed the authors’ vision and the way they represent them” (232). In view of this, the study also considers how the represented economic shifts and attendant shifts in gender relations shape the way authors represent gender issues.

Tanzania’s unique socio-economic history in the East African region makes it an interesting case for study. Some of the socio-economic and political aspects that make Tanzania unique include her pre-colonial heritage as a result of her contacts with the Arabs and Islam; the combination of German (1884-1914) and British (1914-1961) colonial experience; the unique TANU-led (Tanganyika African National Union) anti-colonial nationalist struggle which led to political independence in 1961 without firing a single shot; the union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar in 1964; the adoption of *Ujamaa* in 1967 ; and the swift transition to neo-liberal policies in the early 1980s. All these aspects do not only lend Tanzania an interesting history, they also colour the shifts in the literary representations of gender relations that the study examines.

Accounts of pre-colonial Tanzania mainly focus on tribal histories. Historians, such as John Iliffe and Isaria Kimambo, detail Tanzania’s pre-colonial political and socio-economic formations. They also record how societies, especially those in the interior, had trade links with other societies along the coast of the Indian Ocean through the long distance trade, and later on interacted with the outside world, in particular, the Arabs. According to Iliffe, the participation in trade and the interaction with Arab traders explain why “Tanganyika [and Zanzibar] experienced a transformation more intense than any other region of tropical Africa at that [early pre-colonial contact] time” (40).

Arriving in Tanzania in the 1880s after the Berlin conference, German colonialists legitimized their rule by creating their own administrative and economic systems in Tanzania. They monetised the economy, introduced hut tax in 1897, and introduced cash crops such as coffee in 1890. This way, Tanzania’s economy was restructured and integrated with that of capitalist Germany in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The defeat of the Germans in the First World War by the Allies in 1919 marked the end of thirty-five years of German colonization of Tanganyika. The British took up Tanganyika in 1920 as a

trusteeship colony of the League of Nations. Like the Germans, the British designed an economic policy which was meant to use Tanganyika as a producer of wealth for Britain. This was particularly intensified during the period of the Great Depression in 1929-1933 when Britain sought to maximize economic returns from her colonies as a result of her ailing economy. The Second World War (1939-1945) and the period after, saw further intensification of colonial exploitation. In reviewing the economic impact of this period on African colonial economies, Fredric Cooper notes an increased number of labour strikes in British colonies in Africa during this period.³ As Abdul Sherrif and Ed Ferguson note, labour strikes in the context of Tanzania led to increased nationalist consciousness, which was subsequently seized by TANU under Julius Nyerere. Given that Tanganyika was a trust territory under the administration of the British, it is not surprising that, compared to other anticolonial struggles in the East African region, Tanganyika's struggle for independence was non-violent, a fact that Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania, acknowledges in his independence speech to the General Assembly of the United Nations on the 14th of December 1961. On the 26th of April, 1964 Tanganyika united with Zanzibar to form the United Republic of Tanzania, and Nyerere became her first president.

The nation's post-independence period witnessed two major economic shifts: the adoption and implementation of *Ujamaa* policies from 1967 to the early 1980s and the free market period that officially began in 1985. *Ujamaa* was a Tanzanian version of socialism which was adopted by the Arusha Declaration in 1967.⁴ Literally, *Ujamaa* means 'family hood'. Its aim was to lead to a socialist and self-reliant economy with the key value of equality for all human beings. It "legitimated itself by invoking an idealized construction of traditional African forms of kinship and extended family – one that emphasized reciprocity, collective effort, and an open version of community"; it "registered a type of family hood characterized by connection and fluidity" (Lal 2). Also equated to 'tribal socialism', it attempted a return to the pre-colonial moral economy through the communal organization and control of production. Several measures were put in place in order to realise this ambition. Establishment of *Ujamaa* villages was the major undertaking of the policy. *Ujamaa* villages were to be areas where socialist values and a spirit of

³ Fredrick Cooper in *Decolonization and African Society: The Labour Question in French and British Africa* documents famous strikes in the same period including Dar es Salaam strike of 1947, Zanzibar 1948, Bulawayo 1947, Nigeria railway workers 1945, Nairobi general strike 1950, Mombasa 1947, Accra 1948, and Enugu Colliery strike 1949. A similar case is the Dakar strikes of 1946 as represented in Sembene Ousman's *God's Bits of Wood* (1960).

⁴ The Arusha Declaration outlined Tanzania's social and economic policy in the 1960s. Declared by the government on the 5th of February, 1967 in Arusha town, the policy outlines the principles of *Ujamaa*, the vision of self-reliance, nationalization of the major means of production, and the role of government in bringing economic development to her people.

self-reliance would be promoted. The concern of this study is to review how this period is represented in fiction, in terms of how it impacted on gender relations. The portrayal is examined against a background of *Ujamaa* principles of equality for all human beings.

The failure of *Ujamaa* led to the shift to neoliberal policies in 1985. Marjorie Mbilinyi observes that while *Ujamaa* saw little improvement in gender relations, the structural adjustment policies have improved “gender and class consciousness” and have afforded women “greater negotiating power”, which means “women and men endeavour to create new kinds of gender relations” (26). The study aims to understand the representation of these ‘new’ kinds of gender relations in the neoliberal period. The economic reforms of the eighties meant that the state assumed minimal interference in the economy and promoted individual socio-economic freedoms and responsibilities. The post-*Ujamaa* period is thus known in Tanzania as the *kipindi cha mzee Ruksa* [Mr Ruksa’s period/presidency]. *Ruksa* is Swahili word for permission, and is associated with President Ali Hassan Mwinyi’s popular statement, “*Kila kitu ni ruksa*” [everything is permissible] which earned him the nickname *Mzee Ruksa*. In economic terms, the notion of *ruksa* is close to the *laissez-faire* French philosophy, which is opposed to the state-controlled economy and culture under *Ujamaa*. How do the authors represent this philosophy? How do they represent its impacts on gender obligations and expectations, how does it shape relations of production, and how characters react to it are some of the questions that guide the study’s attempt to understand gender relations during this period.

The study specifically argues that any portrayed economic realignment impacts on the division of labour or roles, access to and control of resources, and decision-making contours. These help to reconstruct existing gender relations. The portrayed economic shifts result in the restructuring of the political public, including the participation of men and women in the public domain and how they relate there. The study maintains that changes in economic relations not only affect the institutions and structures that hold patriarchy in place, they also lead to changes in the ability of one gender to control or influence the life of another. In this regard, the study asks the following questions: How do the characters (both male and female) respond to these economic shifts? And, how do they negotiate, bargain, resist, or appropriate these shifts?

Historical Approach to Analysing the Representation of Gender Relations

Feminist theorists have indicated the need to examine gender relations as a product of history. Ogunidipe-Leslie advises that in studying gender relations “we should be aware of the need to

‘periodize’ African history adequately” (*Re-creating* 32). Since gender relations are not fixed, we need to analyse them bearing in mind that they differ “from society to society, depending on their ethnic history” (*Re-creating* 32). By emphasizing periodization and focussing on specific contexts and histories, Ogundipe-Leslie introduces the idea of context-specific gender relations and their potential to change. The challenge to confront here is how fiction can represent economic shifts and other impact on gender relations or labour in its dual sense explained above.

Aina Olabisi provides a point of departure for this discussion. In examining the representation of gender relations in texts, she argues that one should be interested in “exposing the dynamics of male domination and female subordination through history” (65). This is because patriarchy is produced and reproduced differently by and in “different historical epochs” (65). Therefore, gender relations “may be better explained within different historical epochs – pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial” (68). The pre-colonial, she emphasizes, is the backdrop against which gender relations in all other periods should be examined.

This study uses Olabisi’s model except that as a literary study, the historical epochs are extracted from the novels. The depicted periods are then understood to reflect actual historical moments marked by different economic shifts in Tanzania’s history. The periods are examined as representing the “fluctuations in national [socio-economic] circumstances and mood” (Lindfors 135). The study adopts the texts’ representation of the pre-colonial family and gender relations as a backdrop of the analysis. The colonial, nationalist, *Ujamaa* and neoliberal periods in the economic history of Tanzania are then analysed as “points of destabilization” (Harrow 6), “nodal periods” (Rockwell 4), or “zones of instability” (Szeman 3) around which existing socio-economic structures and gender relations are tested and retested. The economic shifts are considered as “points of destabilization” because they are characterized by the “struggle between the past and the present, [the] sense of operating from a lost position,” and “lack of fullness” (Harrow 6). They represent a “motion” which forms “new and unexpected limits and possibilities” (Szeman 3). In essence, the study is built around Susan Andrade’s idea of the “nation writ small” – in her book of the same title – because the representation of the shifts in gender relations is examined as part of Tanzania’s national allegory. In relation to this observation, the study poses the following questions: To what extent do these economic shifts present new limits and possibilities in terms of gender relations and identities? How do the periods borrow from each other? And how can each shift be read as representing other “points of destabilization” within itself?

Aware of the risks in this periodization, the study considers the borrowings between the epochs, reminding us that these shifts may not represent radical changes. The reason is that change does “not suddenly come into being” because its advent “can never be reduced to a precise time” (Harrow 6). Borrowing insights from Hayden White’s ideas on the relationship between history and literature, the study considers how the lives that are portrayed in selected literary works are conditioned by history and economics, and how they can be read as offering particular insights into history.

Gender Relations in Tanzanian Fiction: A Review

Available studies on the representation of gender relations in Tanzanian fiction debate the causes of gender inequality, how such inequalities are perpetuated, and how they are challenged. This is evident in studies such as those by Richard Mabala, Clement Ndulute, Charles Kayoka, Eliah Sibonike Mwaifuge, Chayha Mtiro, Ananilea Nkya, Ruth Besha, Imani Swila, Elena Bertoncini-Zubkova, Ernesta Mosha, and Elizabeth Gwajima. Among these, one group focuses on the representation of gender relations in Tanzanian literature of Swahili expression. For example, Patricia Mbughuni examines the image of women in Swahili fiction.⁵ She finds that the idolised mother Mary and the demonised temptress Eve stereotypes are dominant in the Swahili novel. Furthermore, female characters are depicted as marriage-oriented and economically dependent on men. She attributes this portrayal to the dominance of male writers in Tanzania.

In extending the theme of economic dependence of women on men, Bertoncini finds that women in Swahili fiction are portrayed either as vamps or victims because they either live at the expense of men or they are subjects of abuse by men. Imani Swila adds that because of the economic inequality, women in Swahili fiction are portrayed as voluptuous, vacuous and vamps. In other words, they are beautiful, less intelligent, and as a result, they are acted upon and used by men. These attributes form what Florence Stratton calls the “attractive packaging” of women characters by male writers because it is the man “who does the naming” (123). The attractive packaging contributes to portraying the woman as dependent on the man. Mosha’s analysis indicates that a woman is portrayed as a being “whose success depends on her sexuality [as she] continually strives to attract men who can best cater to her needs, whether through marriage or love affairs” (22). Such representations of women that are

⁵ The term Swahili fiction suggests that there is a body of literature which is a product of Swahili as an ethnic group. In this study I use it to mean fiction in Swahili language and not necessarily ethnic Swahili literature.

economically dependent on men are problematic because, as Swila later notes, may ignore the economic contributions and independence that women have displayed in Tanzanian history.

The representation of women observed above is, as Bertoncini, Mabala, Chayha Mtiro, and Fikeni Senkoro have noted, a result of the dominance of the 'male gaze', which according to Laura Mulvey, is a way of looking at women mainly as sex objects. According to Bertoncini the overwhelming objectification of female characters in Tanzanian fiction is because there are very few female writers in Tanzania. Endorsing this claim, Mbughuni notes that "perhaps because almost all authors are male, women receive very little character development" (15). Mbughuni and Bertoncini's observation owes to the nation's multiple social, cultural and colonial legacies which reflect the broader picture regarding the exclusion of girls to the nation's educational system⁶.

The effect of the male gaze accounts for both the predominance of the theme of prostitution in Swahili fiction and the trope of motherhood, as Stratton has argued concerning the rest of Africa. In this trope, Stratton insists, "beauty, eroticism, fecundity" are projected to the centre stage in the texts (123). These tropes facilitate portrayals of male economic dominance and female economic dependence. Subsequently, women's economic dependence, Mosha notes, is one of the major causes of the ubiquity of gender violence portrayed in Swahili-language fiction. She further notes that domestic violence, sexual violence, economic violence and child or forced marriages are other forms of violence that women are subjected to as a result of the socio-economic inequalities in the context of Tanzania. In general, Swahili fiction "is replete with discourses that affirm male dominance and inadequately plead the case for women" (Mosha 23).

A few studies that focus on the representation of gender relations in the English-language Tanzanian fiction reveal the same stereotypes. In studying Bernard Mapalala's *Passed like a Shadow* (2006), Gwajima interviews students and focuses in particular on their responses to the novel's representation of gender relations. One of her respondents is critical because "despite the fact that it had been written recently [the novel] failed to distance itself from portraying gender stereotypes in the same way that texts written half a century ago had done" (152). In his study of William Mkufya's *The Wicked Walk* (1977), Mwafuge demonstrates how women's economic poverty facilitates men's control over them both in marriage and in other relationships.

⁶ For statistical explanation of this exclusion see Marjorie J. Mbilinyi "The 'new Woman' and Traditional Norms in Tanzania" (1972), 63-64.

Despite this damning representation of the Tanzanian woman's socio-economic dependence, there is Tanzanian fiction in English which details female characters challenging such social and economic inequalities. Elieshi Lema, a Tanzanian woman writer is outstanding in that her novel *Parched Earth* (2001) represents what Stratton refers to as the "emerging female tradition" which is an "attempt to restore dignity and self-respect to African women" by telling them "where the rain began to beat them" (8). Here Stratton seems to suggest that the way male writers view and represent society is distinguishable from the way female writers view and represent the same. This argument forms Kayoka's thesis statement in his reading of *Parched Earth*. Kayoka's reading of the novel particularly reveals the workings of patriarchy in society. He then explores the way the text represents women's resentment of patriarchy and the subsequent limitation of patriarchy. The same text is studied by Mwaifuge in light of the emergence of the modern Tanzanian woman who rebels against patriarchal structures.

It seems from this brief survey that even in the English-language texts, there is a preponderance of the same stereotypes that the studies on Swahili texts reviewed above detail.

Although the above review indicates that society's socio-economic structures determine gender relations, no previous study has engaged with the question of shifting gender relations and the changing portrayals of gender relations over the period under review in this research. Tracing the development and shifts in gender relations across Tanzania's history has until now been overlooked by these scholars. To compound the problem, although most of them examine both men and women, the male subject has been, to borrow Lisa Lindsay and Stephen Miescher's words, "frequently positioned as a given, serving as a backdrop in the examination of women's experiences" (1). Additionally, in terms of methodology, the trend has been to study the two literatures (Swahili and English) as separate categories. As far as the review is concerned, no comparative study has been made so far. Addressing these shortcomings is the major concern of the study.

In view of these lacunae, the study provides sustained research on the representation of gender relations by tracking its shifts as dictated by the shifts in economic alignments. It addresses the problem of conflating gender with women in the previous studies. While most previous studies depict different images of both men and women, the man has rarely been central in these studies except when he is "the abuser, the oppressor, the patriarch" (Reid and Walker 6), which, I argue, is an incomplete view. On the language question, it fills the lacuna by focusing on gender relations as represented in Tanzanian fiction of both Swahili and English expression. In this regard, it considers the way the two languages carry gendered Tanzanian

cultural idioms and idiosyncrasies. In the analysis, Swahili extracts are cited in their original and then followed by a translation in English. All the translations are mine unless stated otherwise. The study further challenges the ahistorical approach to gender relations in some of the previous scholarship. These studies have ignored the consequence of history in producing the texts, the characters and gender relations. Such an ahistorical approach leads to commission of the ahistorical fallacy which is defined by the lack of an awareness of historical and temporal contexts. A historical approach allows me to understand the fictional depictions of the continuities and discontinuities of traditional gender relations in the periods that follow and the shifts and borrowings between and among these epochs.

In Africa, the representation of gender relations is not a new topic and most of the findings revealed by the Tanzania studies reviewed above may reflect the wider picture of gender relations in Africa. Prominent African/ist scholars such as Helen Chukwuma, Florence Stratton, Juliana Makuchi Nfah-Abbenyi, Akachi Ezeigbo, Elleke Boehmer and many others have examined the portrayal of gender relations in African literature. In their analyses, these scholars also variously offer insights into the representation of gender relations as a product of different economic and historical periods. The challenge is that most of these economic periods and their corresponding gender relations have not been studied as a continuum. In this way, the studies do not allow a period-by-period tracking of shifts in gender relations. This study considers how they evolve and borrow from each period and interrogates the implication of these changes to both inter-gender and intra-gender relations.

In throwing light on the Swahili-English literature interface, it is essential at this stage to provide a brief review of Tanzania's language policy and literary situation and how this impacts on the patterns of creative output in the two languages and literary traditions.

Language Policy, Literature and Literary Studies

Kiswahili has been the mother-tongue of many Tanzanians for a long time. Given the existence of many languages in both colonial and post-colonial mainland Tanzania, the colonial governments (British and German), the nationalist leaders, and the post-independence leadership promoted Swahili as the lingua franca. To strengthen its status, the German colonialists promoted it as the language of administration while the British government standardized it in 1936. In 1966, it was officially adopted as the first national and official language by the post-independence leadership. For Nyerere, English became the second official language, "the language of international relations [and] higher instruction"

while Kiswahili continued to be “a more important language” because “it has proved our greatest asset in our pre-independence struggle as the instrument of uniting the people of the nation’s different tribes” (qtd. in Mbise 54). In the post-independence period Kiswahili became intertwined with culture and politics such that it became “the socio-cultural and politically correct language for most Tanzanians” (Neke 23). Kiswahili became the language of politics and development, or the language “for cultural emancipation [and] national identification” (Ohly 5). It was seen as a tool to promote the country’s ideology of *Ujamaa*.

According to Mwaifuge, the promotion of Kiswahili as the “language of ideology and nationalism” had a great impact on the literature that was produced. The consequence was that “Kiswahili literature became the *de facto* national literature” (7). In fusing the *Ujamaa* ideology with the national literature, Nyerere had in 1968 officially asked writers “to use their talents in order to promote a better understanding [...] of national politics and particularly of the responsibilities of the citizen resulting from the implementation of the Arusha Declaration” (147). In schools, the curriculum also reflected this commitment where “the emphasis of literature fitted well with the Arusha Declaration[and] literature as a part of the curriculum of ESR (Education for Self Reliance) was thought to play an important role in developing social, cultural and political values of Tanzania” (Emmanuel 4). While the leadership sought to promote Kiswahili, it did not mean that English was discouraged. According to Nyerere, Tanzania cannot do without English:

English is the Swahili of the world and for that reason it must be given the weight it deserves in our country [...] it is wrong to leave English to die. To reject English is foolishness, not patriotism. English will be the medium of instruction in secondary schools and institutions of higher education because if it is left only as a normal subject it may die. (qtd. in Campbell 100)

His point was that English is as important to the world as Kiswahili is to Tanzania. But in practice, the two languages were hierarchised with Kiswahili being privileged.

The consequence of the language policy and the preference for Kiswahili over English are further reflected in literary writing in the two languages, such that “Swahili literature enjoys a favourable position because Kiswahili has been officially adopted as the national language” (Lindfors 125). Writing in English is like “speaking only to a tiny elite, some of whom have no desire to listen” (Ibid 125). Mwaifuge also notes the role of and the monopoly by the government publishing house –Tanzania Publishing House – and the *Ujamaa* project in promoting writing in Kiswahili

language. The result was that “by 1975, it had become much easier to get published in Kiswahili than in English [...] English had lost its prestige” (Arnold 959). Politically, economically and socially, it was more convenient writing in Kiswahili than in English. In his reading of Taban Lo Liyong’s provocative essay, “Is East Africa a Cultural Desert?” Stephen Arnold observes that “Tanzania was never even mentioned” because any “survey of East African literature grants Tanzania a literature in Kiswahili” (949) and as a result “nothing in Tanzania’s Anglophone output has rocked the International literary seismography, nor is likely to cause measurable vibrations on the Richter Scale” (958).

However, the cause for optimism is that a few writers are attempting to write in English. Bilingual writing seems to offer new sanctuary for many Tanzanian writers, in a way that complicates the debate. In his article “Across the Language Border: The Case of Bilingual Writers in Tanzania,” Mikhail Gromov claims that “English has been holding a much more tangible position in Tanzanian literature even from its very first days. [Since the] 1970s, Tanzanian literature features a small, but artistically accomplished group of English authors” and, in fact, “novel writing started with English books – *Dying in the Sun* by Peter Palangyo and *Village in Uhuru* by Gabriel Ruhumbika” (283). Identifying the first novel is surely a very ambitious and debatable inquiry. There are already bifurcations on this topic. For now, I take it that Gromov uses the word ‘writing’ to mean ‘publishing’ and therefore he must be aware that Aniceti Kitereza wrote *Bwana Myombekere* in 1945 and it was published in 1982.

This brief review raises two points: the coexistence of English and Swahili languages indicates that they complement each other and that the literature in Swahili is more popular than that in English. The impact of this imbalance is that in terms of attracting scholarly attention, Tanzanian literature in English has “remained on the fringes for many years” (Mwaifuge “The Creative” 11) and a “much smaller population of Anglophone Tanzanian writers [...] remains a quite neglected area of literary study” (Makokha and Barasa 216). The interface of an African language and a European language as tools of conveying gender relations is a fresh angle offered in this study. If, as Emmanuel Ngara has suggested, “a language is not only words and grammatical structures: the use of language carries with it prejudices, habits and mannerisms” of its writers (19), then reading both Tanzanian texts in English and Swahili, opens up a possibility of examining how the languages colour the selected authors’ representations of the shifts in gender relations in the respective economic nodes across the country’s history. Considering that most of the writers studied also write in both languages, the dual language approach adopted in the study captures what Alain Ricard has called the “go-betweens,” in reference to bilingual writers. Ricard notes

that the exchanges between languages are a “driving force behind Tanzania’s success in the literary field” (123).

Defining Tanzanian Fiction

In *African Textualities: Texts, Pre-texts and Contexts in African Literature*, Lindfors asks: “are there any national literatures in Africa?” (121)⁷. He claims that a body of literature may be considered ‘national’ only if it meets the standard national criteria, namely “language, subject matter, style, ideas, audience, quantity, and quality of output” (121). Wellek and Warren note that it is not just a matter of “geographical or linguistic categories” but “the national consciousness of the author [...] the national subject matter [...] local color and national literary style” (41). The national subject, audience, style, colour, consciousness are surely not easy to define. Furthermore, the ambiguities surrounding the concept of the nation itself complicate the situation.

Since the aim of the study is to examine depictions of shifting gender relations in Tanzanian fiction, the focus must be on novels rich in Tanzanian socio-economic experience. The study stresses the richness of experience as one of the criteria, also in line with Chinua Achebe’s view that “a national literature presupposes a national experience which is unique and distinguishable from national experiences elsewhere” (127). Such experiences bring together Tanzania’s linguistic, political, socio-cultural, and literary complexity.

The coexistence of Swahili and English languages has produced different ways of writing the nation. The first includes writers who have chosen to write in English but with a Tanzanian idiosyncrasy. A review of the first three Tanzanian novels in English, namely *Dying in the Sun* (1967), *Village in Uhuru* (1969) and *The Gathering Storm* (1977) indicates that the authors create a Tanzanian sensibility by including Tanzanian idioms as well as long explanatory prefaces and glossaries in these works. As Gikandi has noted, it is possible for the African writer to ‘domesticate’ English to “make it his own” and “mould it into an instrument of investigating historical and social issues peculiarly African” (231). Here, Gikandi is echoing Achebe. The use of fiction to document Tanzania’s historical issues is further buttressed by Gikandi and Evan Mwangi in their introduction to *The Columbia Guide to East African Literature in English since 1945* where they claim that the unique feature of Tanzanian writers in English language is that they are “concerned with rewriting real historical events as a contribution to an on-going debate on the role of culture in national development” (17). This means Tanzanian writers use English

⁷ See also Christopher Miller’s essay “Nationalism as resistance and Resistance to Nationalism in the Literature of Francophone Africa.” *Yale French Studies* 82.1 (1993).

to “draw from the same background” as Swahili; “featuring similar or related themes” and evaluating the “Tanzanian society socially, culturally, economically and politically” (Mwaifuge 16).

The second trend is that some writers have chosen to write in both languages, that is, they want to remain Tanzanian and at the same time avoid the label of either a “Swahili writer [or] Tanzanian English writer” (Gromov 289). A good example here is Ruhumbika who made his debut with *Village in Uhuru* – a novel in English, and he has since then been writing in both Swahili and English.

A third trajectory includes writers who write in one of the two languages and later on translate them into the other. Ruhumbika’s most recent novel, *The Silent Empowerments of the Compatriots* (2009) is a translation of his earlier novel *Miradi Bubu ya Wazalendo* (1991). Aldin Mutembei’s Swahili novel, *Kisiki Kikavu* (2005) has been translated into English as *The Dry Stump* (2009). Such transition from one language to another indicates that the writing scene is complex and defies the logic of defining Tanzanian literature on the basis of language.

In view of this, attempting to define Tanzanian literature on the basis of language is problematic as some writers are in fact crossing the border by becoming bilingual writers. Secondly, as Mazrui has noted, Swahili has ceased to be a uniquely Tanzanian identity, as it is spoken beyond the borders of the country. This study then defines Tanzanian fiction on the basis of the richness of Tanzania’s socio-economic life that is presented in it.

Selection of Texts

The study is based on Gikandi’s opinion that the “area where literature meets history” is where “the novel has proved itself most adept as a social document, and avenue of exploring political and related developments” (232). The focus is on how the economic shifts influence the lives that are presented in these novels and how these lives help us understand gender relations as a product of the nation-changing ‘moments.’ Only those texts that interrogate the period in question are taken for the study. A minimum of two key texts, one Swahili and the other English, are examined in each of the core chapters. These are then supplemented by secondary texts. In choosing the texts for the respective periods, I privilege novels whose narrators and characters acknowledge their socio-economic setting in the period in question. This is based on what Georg Lukács calls the “poetic awakening of the people who figure in these [depicted historical] events” (42). The implication of this is that the characters in the historical novels are “endowed with moral and dispositional qualities that are influenced by the historical realities of the period in

which the novel is set” (Ohaeto 125). In novels where characters display this awareness, it is possible to examine their attitudes regarding the past and the present and “re-experience the social and human motives which led men [and women] to think, feel and act just as they did in historical reality” (Lukács 42). It is therefore the awareness of the characters living in this period that is of primary importance if we are to understand depicted gender relations as a product of the economic period in question. The periodization adopted by the study is in reference to the novels’ settings and not the dates of publication. What the texts offer are therefore fictional accounts of the economic orientations and their impact on gender relations.

In a study of the representation of gender relations, the issue of the authors’ gender is inevitably important. After having carefully selected the texts on the basis of the characters’ “poetic awakening” as advanced above by Lukács, it is curious to note that all the key texts are authored by male writers. A warning about this mono-gendered approach is given by Stratton in her influential work *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender*. She cautions:

When African literary discourse is considered from the perspective of gender, it becomes evident that dialogic interaction between men’s and women’s writing is one of the defining features of the contemporary African literary tradition. Such a redefinition has important implications for both critical and pedagogical practices. What it indicates is that neither men’s nor women’s writing can be fully appreciated in isolation from the other. (1)

Here Stratton calls for a study that compares the portrayal of gender relations by male authors and female authors. This is beyond the scope of the study owing to the limited range of women writers dealing with these issues in the historical settings. However, I argue that the mono-gendered approach adopted here should not be seen as a shortcoming rather it must be seen as strength in that it also allows for consistency in using as my main texts only fiction by male authors.

In view of the above observation, the thesis occasionally deploys other texts by female writers, in particular Lema’s *Parched Earth* both as a ‘control text’ and as offering a ‘fictionalized theory’ of patriarchy as will be shown in chapter two. I do so in cognizance of Lema’s place in as far as Tanzanian literature in English writing is concerned. *Parched Earth* is adopted in this study as a control text because its writer is the only renowned representative of Tanzanian women writing in English. Secondly, her incisive attack on patriarchy and her quest to offer an alternative picture of

male-female relations would be far more revealing when examined in relation to depictions of how gender relations shift across the periods and in male-authored works.

Another challenge is to have a sample that is representative enough to capture the diversity that is embedded in analysing Tanzania as a nation. Lindfors proposes that we need to focus on “the larger theme and describe an experience common to many of the cultures in the country” (127). Through the focus on labour as an aspect of gender relations that is universal, the study recognises diversities entailed in the idea of the nation. Below is a summary of the key texts selected.

In examining the pre-colonial period, the study uses Aniceti Kitereza’s *Mr. Myombekere, his wife Bugonoka, their Son Ntulanalwo and Daughter Buliwhali* (2002) and Bernard Mapalala’s *Kwaheri Iselamagazi* (1992) [Goodbye Iselamagazi]. The declared intention by both writers is to salvage the pre-colonial histories and customs of the writers’ ethnic groups, namely Kerewe and Nyamwezi respectively. The representation of the traditional family, the role of kinship in shaping gender relations, and the socio-economic definition of procreation are some of the issues that the novels address.

Hamza Sokko’s *The Gathering Storm* (1977) and Adam Shafi’s *Kuli* [Coolie] (1982) depict the colonial period. These novelists focus mostly on the depiction of the effects of colonial economic policies and the resulting cultural clashes between the colonialists and the indigenous communities. The novelists do this by showing how a particular ethnic group, town, work place (harbours, plantations, mines, colonial homes) experiences colonialism. My interest is the extent to which colonial socio-economic policies refined gender relations in colonial Tanzania.

Emmanuel Makaidi’s *The Serpent-Hearted Politician* (1982) and Adam Shafi’s *Vuta n’ kuvute* (1999),⁸ are selected for their focus on the anticolonial period in the history of Tanzania. They depict anticolonial nationalism and show how the gendering of the struggles reflects the existing colonial economic inequalities on the one hand and the gendered nationalist labour economics on the other.

Gabriel Ruhumbika’s *Village in Uhuru* (1969) and S. Ndunguru’s *The Lion of Yola* (2004) offer a detailed account of the complexities involving the implementation of villagisation as the cornerstone of *Ujamaa*. By depicting the socio-economic changes caused as a result of villagisation, the novels provide a way of understanding how gender relations were also

⁸ Swahili speakers use *vuta n’ kuvute* to describe a ‘tug of war situation.’ Shafi uses this image to describe the political and social tensions that characterize the nationalist phase in Zanzibar.

restructured as a result of this shift. Chachage S. Chachage's *Makuadi wa Soko Huria* (2002) [Pimps of Free Market] depicts the challenges and opportunities in the neo-liberalism period, which began in the 1980s after the failure of the *Ujamaa* policies.

Theoretical Points of Departure

Patriarchy is one of the central motifs of this thesis and a theoretical tool for describing power relations between men and women. It intersects with other identity categories such as race, religion, and class to further complicate gender relations. The overlapping of the above identity categories with gender is built around the concept of intersectionality as advocated by Patricia Hills-Collins, Kimberle Crenshaw, and Chandra Mohanty among others. They theorise about the experience of the black woman and argue that understanding her requires examining how gender intersects with other 'axes' of oppression like race and class. In her reading of both Crenshaw and Yuval-Davis' works on intersectionality, Kathy Davis argues that, for Crenshaw, intersectionality is about the "crossroad" of the experience of the black woman while for Yuval-Davis, intersectionality constitutes the "axes of difference" (44). Due to the cross-fertilization between gender and other categories, the second argument they make is that even the multiple oppression or unequal gender relations are experienced differently by different women and therefore it is essential that we acknowledge the differences among women as Mohanty clearly argues in her article "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse."

Using a similar conception, the study recognised men as a heterogeneous group. The study applies the same framework to understand the portrayal of gender relations and how gender is a dependent variable in determining gender relations. It also considers how various versions of patriarchies such as the colonial and indigenous intersect to shape gender relations. It further examines how patriarchy intersects with racial identities to shape gender relations; while paying attention to other neglected points of intersection between gender and other categories such as age.

In using the insights offered by the intersectionality theorists above, the study seeks to challenge the theories that see "women as an already constituted and coherent group [...] regardless of class, ethnic or racial location" who lead "a truncated life [...] sexually constrained [...] ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, religious, domesticated, family oriented, victimized etc" (Mohanty 65). For example, the aspect of gender relations that Mohanty attacks is the equation of power to men and powerlessness to women. We need to

see such generalizations as unfounded or at best what Ogundipe-Leslie refers to as “the myths and pitfalls to be avoided” in the study of the African woman (*Re-creating* 49). In using the same deductions, the study seeks to demonstrate that even men are neither the same unified category nor are they equally privileged or powerful. Patriarchy, as Doreen, one of Elieshi Lema’s female characters in *Parched Earth* (2001) reminds us, is “a web in which, ultimately, even those privileged can become victims” (182). In other words, power as an aspect of gender relations is never monopolised by one gender, and as Foucault has theorised, it is “something that circulates” (98).

As an ideology, patriarchy is put in place and supported by several institutions which then shape the way men and women relate. R. W. Connell proposes the notion of patriarchal dividend as one of the bases for studying the evolution of gender relations. She theorises that the “patriarchal dividend” refers to the advantages that men have by virtue of being men. With regard to changes in gender relations, the dividend is “reduced as gender equality grows” (142). The dividend is based on privileges. Building on this insight, the study interrogates how such privileges have been challenged and or perpetuated by Tanzania’s economic shifts. Although the study concurs that men are, to some extent, privileged by being men, at the same time, the study argues that there is no point in ignoring the ‘costs’ men pay for being privileged. The so called ‘privileges’ actually cost men and these costs, in fact, shape the way men and women relate. In examining this, attention is paid to how men in traditional society are depicted in the key texts of chapter two; for example, how they use impression management techniques to please their societies and members of the kinship and how men in the depicted colonial period seek to keep their jobs regardless of the poor working conditions. The departure suggested here is to analyse the representation of both men and women as potential victims and or victors of patriarchy and the context of various economic shifts.

The study also emphasizes that we cannot ignore women’s attempts to challenge such dividends. This idea of women’s (and men’s) agency forces us to see gender relations as embedded in the power relations which govern society. In this case, the study also draws on theories that shed light on power and gender. Foucault’s theory of power offers useful insights:

Power is not to be taken to be a phenomenon of one individual’s consolidated and homogeneous domination over others or that of one group or class over others. What, by contrast, should always be kept in mind is that

power must be analysed as something that circulates. It is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. (98)

According to Foucault, power and resistance are two sides of the same coin. By arguing that "where there is power there is resistance" (95), Foucault allows me to argue that the patriarchal power in all the periods reviewed has not been taken as a given by characters – it has been and continues to be challenged by them. These contestations and negotiations do shift and are always "generated in webs of agency and power" (Ong 3). By looking at gender relations as based on power and resistance, and by considering power as relational, gender relations may then be seen as 'actively' constructed, reconstructed and or deconstructed even by the subordinated. In this regard, I borrow Lois McNay's argument that "to regard women as powerless and innocent victims of patriarchal social structures hampers many types of feminist analysis." She attests that we need then "to account for the potential of women's creativity and agency within social constraints" (63-64). The study equally argues that assuming that men are powerful limits our understanding of actual gender relations. The study indicates that there are varied forms of resistance and that they are differently displayed by men and women.

Apart from characters' resistance, another aspect considered is characters' negotiation or bargaining. These are advanced by scholars such as Deniz Kandiyoti, Hanna Herzog, Obioma Nnaemeka, and James Scott. Negotiation and bargaining are preferred because they enable us to see power as actively bargained or negotiated among characters. The study stresses that bargaining and negotiating are insightful if we see gender relations as produced through interaction. According to the proponents of the 'interactionist' approach to gender studies, such as Candace West and Don Zimmerman and their concept of "doing gender," gender may be produced and reproduced only in interaction. This approach offers potential for production of new gender relations and the theorisation of change.

In view of the centrality of negotiation/bargaining in the interactionist approach to gender relations, Oriel Sullivan introduces two other elements, namely boundaries and consciousness. While boundaries mean the edges of spaces or spheres inhabited by respective genders, we need to see these boundaries as social constructs and therefore, permeable, so that men and women are able to ply between the boundaries/spaces. The second idea that Sullivan

advocates is consciousness. It signifies how men and women consciously participate in “setting up, maintaining, and altering the system of gender relations” (12). The point is that ‘consciousness’ can be applied to men as well, provided that they consciously alter their rights and responsibilities in favour of gender equality or inequality. The strength of the boundaries-negotiation-consciousness continuum is that any change in any of the dimensions, be it at an individual, societal or state level, automatically leads to change in the other dimensions. It is for this reason that the combination of the “doing gender” approach advanced by West and Zimmerman, and theorised further by Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnel-Ginet, is proposed by Sullivan to be the most appropriate framework for examining gender relations and their change. The study finds this framework useful and therefore, adopts and uses it in conjunction with others.

Since the study is about the fiction-history/economic shifts interface and how characters’ experiences of history/economic shifts produce or reproduce gender relations, it also benefits from the insights offered by the multifaceted African feminist theoretical framework. The framework stresses among other things the importance of history and specific African cultural experiences in analysing gender relations. Aware of the bifurcations in this body of theory, the study does not seek to reproduce such debates. Rather it benefits from other scholars such as Davies and Graves, Mary Modupe Kolawole, Molara Ogundipe Leslie, Filomena Chioma Steady, Obioma Nnaemeka and Nfah-Abbenyi, Susan Arndt and Gwendolyn Mikell, among others. These scholars theorise the experiences of an African woman. As Arndt has noted, there are possible diversions in this body of theories, but it has a “common denominator” (32): “it gets to the bottom of African gender relations-illuminating their causes and consequences” (32). It is built on African “cultural literacy” (Nnaemeka, *The Politics* 1). Although their theorisation focuses more on the African woman’s experiences, these experiences are in this study analysed in comparison to those of men and therefore useful in the study’s interrogation of how men and women relate.

Another useful aspect of African feminism is its attention to specific historical/ economic contexts. Ogundipe has delineated the six ‘mountains’ on the back of the African woman, namely colonialism, traditional structures, backwardness, race, man and herself as the “specific condition of the woman in Africa” (27). Without getting into details about the problematic entailed in her usage of the term ‘Africa,’ it is instructive that she reminds us that African women just like men are not homogeneous groups even in Africa itself. She contends that the understanding of patriarchy must “not be a simplistic paradigm of all women ranged

against all men [because] patriarchy takes different and complex forms in different societies” (16).

The above mentioned ‘denominator’ resonates with the concerns of intersectionality theorists delineated above. But Arndt is more nuanced in her presentation of this aspect of intersectionality. African feminism, she theorises “aims at discussing gender roles in the context of other oppressive mechanisms such as racism, neo-colonialism, (cultural) imperialism, socio-economic exclusion and exploitation, gerontocracy, religious fundamentalism as well as dictatorial and/or corrupt systems” (32). Therefore, she claims, African feminism “exceeds the race-class-gender” approach of western feminist theorists (32). The study takes this to be a convincing deduction because gender relations are both multidimensional and a result of different factors and time and not merely race, class and gender.

Drawing on insights from these gender theories, the study seeks to answer the following key questions: How do writers portray the temporal epochs as signalling economic shifts? How can we read these epochs and economic shifts as inspiring new patterns of gender relations? How do gender relations depicted in each period reflect borrowings among the periods or economic shifts? And, does each temporal setting/economic shift offer a unique approach of literary representations of gender relations?

Outline of the Thesis

This chapter has introduced the study and delineated the methodology and theoretical tools to be used and the different questions to be answered.

Chapter two explores the representation of gender relations in pre-colonial Tanzanian communities. In examining this period, the chapter uses *Mr Myombekere, his wife Bugonoka, their Son Ntulanalwo and Daughter Buliwhali* and Bernard Mapalala’s *Kwaheri Iselamagazi*. Harrow’s term for this literature is *témoignage* literature. *Témoignage* is a French term, which means ‘testimony.’ The nature of the literature of *témoignage* according to Harrow is “to give a presence to African literature that would provide a basis for its future developments” (34). The knowledge of the socio-economics of gender relations in this period provides a foundation on which subsequent gender relations can be based, questioned or even idealized.

Chapter three explores the portrayal of colonialism both as an economic reorientation and as a contact space between the cultures of the colonialists and the colonized. The extent to which

colonial economic policies impacted upon gender relations in the colony is interrogated through the analysis of the representation of gender relations in Hamza Sokko's *The Gathering Storm* and Adam Shafi's *Kuli*. This period represents the first "point of destabilisation" of gender relations owing to the economic realignment entailed by colonial economic and labour policies. The study further considers how both male and female characters struggle to appropriate the existing colonial economic policies to their advantage and how such appropriation helps them alter gender relations. The chapter notes the recalling of class and racial divides that were entrenched in the nation through the pre-colonial Arab, Swahili and Islamic culture. The recalled variables combine with colonial gendered economic policies to complicate gender relations in this period.

Chapter four focuses on the nationalist struggle economy. It analyses fictions that depict the anticolonial struggles in the last two decades of colonialism in Tanzania. The main purpose is to see how the existing economic structures inform characters' participation in the struggle for independence while at the same time examining how male and female characters relate during the struggle. Using Emmanuel Makaidi's *The Serpent-Hearted Politician* and Adam Shafi's *Vuta n' kuvute*, and making reference to other novels, the chapter offers another angle. It analyses the representation of anticolonial nationalism and how the gendering of the struggles reflects the existing colonial economic inequalities on the one hand and the gendered nationalist labour economics on the other. Considering that this is still a colonial period the question asked is: How do the existing economic relations (access to and control of labour and resources) shape the way men and women participate in the nationalist struggles and how do they shape the way they relate? An inquiry into how categories such as race, religion, and class intersect with economic factors to impact the way gender relations are produced in this period is also offered. The study also considers how the traditional gender scripts work along colonial economic policies to define gender relations on the nationalist scene.

Chapter five examines gender in the post-independence period and it focuses on two major developments as represented in the fiction: *Ujamaa* policy and the free market period. In analysing the novels set in the *Ujamaa* period, the study shows the extent to which the *Ujamaa* slogan of equality for all human beings was implemented at the level of gender equality. By looking at the portrayal of its economic trickle-down impact, the chapter highlights a few positive redefinitions of gender relations. This is done through the reading of Gabriel Ruhumbika's *Village in Uhuru* and S. Ndunguru's *The Lion of Yola*. The second period examined in this chapter is the transition from *Ujamaa* to the free market economy.

The concern here is to examine how writers represent both the opportunities and challenges of economic liberalization in relation to existing gender relations. Using Chachage S. Chachage's *Makuadi wa Soko Huria* in conjunction with other novels to examine gender relations in this period, the chapter finds that traditional, colonial, and post-independence local forces converge with the global, resulting in complex gender dynamics.

Chapter six concludes the study by highlighting key points and makes some recommendations. It draws on the commonalities and differences in the portrayal of the interface between temporal setting/economic shifts and gender relations in these different epochs and across Swahili and English Tanzanian writing.

Chapter Two: Pre-colonial Gender Relations in Tanzanian Fiction

Introduction

The point of departure for this chapter is the view of patriarchy held by Doreen and Joseph in Elieshi Lema's novel *Parched Earth*. They note that patriarchy is a "social web" that "has defined how men and women will relate in all spheres of life [...], has given the man the authority to decide, to act, to give or withhold, to access or retain anything [...]. It is complex [...] a web in which even those privileged can become victims" (182). This 'web' traps both men and women. Their view of patriarchy speaks to the afflictions of women as a result of patriarchal socialisation. It also provides room for looking at men as potential victims of a system that is thought to favour them.

Using Aniceti Kitereza's *Mr Myombekere, his Wife Bugonoka, their Son Ntulanalwo and Daughter Bulihwali: The Story of an Ancient Community* and Bernard Mapalala's *Kwaheri Iselamagazi* (hereafter *Myombekere* and *Kwaheri* respectively), the chapter builds on Doreen and Joseph's 'fictionalised theory' of patriarchy and examines the representation of gendered labour in the pre-colonial societies in Tanzania. In seeking to understand gender relations in this period, patriarchy and kinship are analysed as overarching variables. This is because the novels depict kinship and patriarchy as interlocking systems that regulate society's reproduction and production. To this end, reproduction and production are analysed as the material bedrock of gender relations in the depicted communities. Power and authority, which are considered as vectors of patriarchy by Doreen and Joseph, are also analysed as products of the socio-economic landscape of the period. Defining power in Max Weber's sense of "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance" (152), and authority as a form of power, the chapter also examines the characters' attempts to shape or negotiate patriarchal and or kinship power and authority.

Doreen and Joseph's metaphor of patriarchy as a "web" provides that in a patriarchal society, anyone regardless of their gender can be a victim or agent. As Nnaemeka has noted, "victims are equally agents and oppressors are also victims" (22). It also implies that anyone regardless of gender can participate in either perpetuating or challenging patriarchal privileges. Through the metaphor, the chapter argues for examining the representation of both men and women as bargaining and negotiating with, adapting and acquiescing to, and/or struggling against the patriarchal relations and the existing pre-colonial labour expectations.

The novels portray the individual through the lens of Aristotelian ‘man as a social animal’ in which the society precedes the individual. The precedence of society is recounted through the portrayal of the tragedy of childlessness and suboptimal fertility in societies where child-bearing is a necessary human labour and gives meaning to human life. A couple in *Myombekere*, that is, Myombekere and Bugonoka, is hit by childlessness as a result of secondary infertility – which is understood as infertility “after one or more successful pregnancies” (Hinkkanen 54). In *Kwaheri*, the focus is on Isamba, the wife of Matumula. The couple – especially the wife – is considered a failure and a disgrace because she has given birth to only one child. A single child in this society is as good as having none. As a result of pressure from their societies the husbands respond differently. While the Myombekeres in *Myombekere* try to achieve their reproductive normalcy by seeking remedy from traditional healers, Matumula in *Kwaheri* mistreats his wife in order to please the extended family. The chapter therefore seeks to provide a socio-economic explanation of motherhood/fertility as an institution.

A pronatalist society is guided by two fertility norms: “All married couples should reproduce [and] All couples should want to reproduce” (Miall 268). This is a summary of a dominant discourse which idolises motherhood as a woman’s primary labour debt to society. Childlessness and/or suboptimal fertility are as a result depicted as a failure of the couples, women in particular, to contribute their reproductive labour to their societies. One of the most fascinating analyses of compulsory maternity is by Nfah-Abbenyi in *Gender in African Women’s Writings*. In reviewing the theme of childbearing in selected African fiction, she observes that many African writers portray the duty of wives to be that of bearing children “without which they have no place in society” (37). That is, “pregnancy and reproduction make a woman, a *woman*” (39). It serves to confirm a woman’s femaleness. Since both the husbands and the wives are demanders and suppliers of children, the pressure to procreate, should logically be experienced by both. That is, if reproduction makes a woman a *woman*, it certainly makes a man, a *man*, Nfah-Abbenyi concludes.

The portrayal of total childlessness and having fewer children as social failures is a result of the socio-economic valuing of many children in the pre-colonial period. Among the Nyamwezi, an ethnic group depicted in *Kwaheri*, for example, a “man is said to be hard on his wife”: she should give birth until all her “eggs are finished” and it was “not rare to hear women bragging about giving birth up to 12 children” (Hinkkanen 59). Among the Baganda of Uganda a “woman with one or two children is regarded as a ‘one-eyed person’ deserving

pity” (Obbo 81). Children are wealth – they are precious ‘commodities’ that the couples are expected to produce and possess. How the novels depict gender relations in a family without children and the extent to which the texts provide avenues for the characters to produce a counter-discourse to childlessness are the issues this chapter interrogates.

The analysis benefits from the insights offered by African feminist theorists such as Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie, Filomena Steady, Carole Boyce Davis and Davies Grave. Their insights on motherhood and childbearing; their emphasis on African historical and cultural experiences; and their views on institutions such as bridewealth, polygyny and other patriarchy-supporting structures inform the analysis. The common denominator among these theorists is to get “to the bottom of African gender relations – illuminating their causes and consequences” (Arndt 32). These theorists are employed in conjunction with the ‘bargain/negotiation’ framework devised by theorists such as Kandiyoti, Herzog, and Nnaemeka.

The reason for using the bargaining/negotiation framework is to delineate characters as able to create alternatives as they “negotiate with or negotiate around patriarchy in different contexts” (Nnaemeka 378). Nnaemeka’s *Negofeminism* is an important tool for the study. It addresses the diversity of “feminisms in Africa” and as such it is itself a “term that names African feminisms” and emphasizes an interest in the “African environment” (361). According to Nnaemeka, *negofeminism* involves what “women do for themselves” and “what they do for others”. It is a “feminism of negotiation” and it “stands for ‘no ego’ feminism” (376). Its principle values are “negotiation, give and take, compromise, and balance” where negotiation is defined as “give and take/exchange” and “cope with successfully”. It “challenges through negotiation and compromise” and knows when and how to “detonate patriarchal landmines” (378). Although Nnaemeka specifically uses the experience of the African woman to demonstrate how they live *negofeminism*, I find her insights illuminating for my study in that I extend it to include men’s negotiation with women or with their societies.

In extending Nnaemeka’s theme of negotiation and resistance, Foucault’s theory of power allows me to see power as fluid and circulating among the characters irrespective of gender. Highlighting the relationship between power and resistance, Foucault argues that “where there is power, there is resistance” (95). By seeing power and resistance as pervasive, the chapter considers that the novels are articulating both power and resistance. The novel as a form of discourse “transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart” (101). Blending the two frameworks, I argue that the novels portray both men and women as victims of societal expectations and

patriarchal gendered labour and argue that both male and female characters use different methods to strategize around, bargain with, or resist in both the family and the larger community.

The pre-colonial period examined in this chapter serves as the background against which subsequent periods in Tanzanian history are examined. For this reason, the chapter begins by exploring the writing style and approach to society that is typical in the literature which depicts this period. In particular, the chapter explores the relationship between the ethnographic novel and the nation. The chapter then examines the representation of the origin of the family and the processes involved in founding a family. The practice of bridewealth is examined as both an economic aspect and as facilitating checks and balances between the wife and the husband on the one hand and the couple and the society on the other. The central theme of childbearing is also examined. This is followed by an exploration of different resistance strategies in the family, with special focus on the husband-wife relations.

The Ethnographic Novel and the ‘Nation’ Question

The blurb on *Myombekere* describes the novel as a “mine of ethnographic, historical, and scientific information about the pre-colonial Kerewe.” What constitutes an ‘ethnographic’ novel has attracted the attention of a number of scholars such as Carey Snyder, Eleni Coundouriotis, Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, Nyamnjoh Francis, Oladele Taiwo, Janos Riesz, Thomas Lyons, and Ato Quayson. In interrogating the relationship between fiction and ethnography in the context of Africa, most of these have used Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* to argue their case. Cited among the uniqueness of this genre is the writer’s need to “document and share insider accounts of their societies” (Nyamnjoh 701). This is done to correct the misrepresentation of African societies in works such as Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, or accounts by European travellers, colonial administrators and anthropologists (also known as imperial adventure fiction) whose writings Achebe sees as a “contagion of distaste, hatred and mockery” of the African cultures (*Home* 21). As a result of this debasement, the ethnographic novel in Africa has been “paradigmatic of a common approach to African literature” (Snyder 156). It serves “to set the record straight” (Coundouriotis 75).

In writing about their ethnic groups, Kitereza and Mapalala draw from the past through ethnographic research which then serves as the basis for writing their fiction. Kitereza acknowledges this approach:

I began to carefully search for those secrets of long ago, those things loved and those things despised [...] I realized that the most despised person was the one unable to have children, whether a man or a woman. Such a man–*mgumba*⁹–was greatly ridiculed by those whose fortune was good [...] I decided to write a book about the life of a man and his wife who were unable to have a family, and how they were troubled, worried and anxious. (Hartwig 167)

Kitereza's reference to research as a first step matches with Riesz who notes that research "suggests certain subject and content to fictional literature, which the latter then appropriates" (17). For Riesz and the selected authors, ethnographic research is a prerequisite for writing literature based on a given historical period.

Achebe's expotulation against colonial disregard for tribal ethnographies is echoed in Kitereza's struggle to publish his novel in colonial Tanzania. The novel's manuscript first appeared in Kerewe with the aim of reaching the 'insiders,' the Kerewe youth. Completed in 1945 and written in an indigenous language in a colonial setting, the manuscript could not attract publishers. In 1968, he began translating it into Swahili with the aim of attracting publishers and reaching the outside world. The Swahili version was finally published in 1981, a few weeks after his death. Although the novel was published after independence, it is worth exploring because it offers a rich account of the pre-colonial Kerewe which was enhanced by the author's interest in Kerewe folklore.

Kitereza's fascination with preserving the past and writing about "the ways of our fathers" who lived from "1670 to 1870 before Europeans had come to our country" (Hartwig 167) forces him to shuttle to the pre-colonial period to draw his narrative sources. In this way, Mulokozi notes, he "serves as a bridge between the two eras revealing the past to the youth [...] while presumably remaining staunchly modern and progressive in outlook and practice" (319). A closer analysis however, reveals that Christian values and writing in retrospect influence him. Myombekere, the character Kitereza identifies with, denounces practices such as polygyny, and insists that children are a gift from God. He also remains committed to his wife despite the pressure from his community. These indicate a person that does not share many values with the society whose history he claims he wants to salvage.

⁹Swahili word for a barren person.

While Kitereza sets his novel in the seventeenth century, Mapalala sets his late in the nineteenth century and he indicates on the blurb the same reason of salvaging the history of the community. His novel is organized in two parts where the first takes the form of folklore and relates the life of Matumula and Isamba as a couple while the second is about the life of their son, Lumbesi, and his attempts to rule the chiefdom. Matumula, a foreigner in Ulele, meets Isamba. Isamba is the daughter of Queen Umbashi who rules the country. The custom decrees that she is not allowed to marry Matumula because he is a foreigner. She defies this custom and flees with Matumula. They settle as a couple in the husband's home country. Of interest in this chapter is the portrayal of Isamba's secondary infertility, a theme that also runs in *Myombekere*. The aim is to provide characters' socio-economic explanation of fertility or infertility.

As cultural insiders, the authors use their cultural fluency to represent the psychology that shapes everyday life of their communities. The main idea, as Leopold Senghor has noted, is "the need to reach the public at large by making the account of scientific facts more attractive, and that is the ethnographic novel" (qtd. in Riesz 27). The extent to which they represent the lives of their respective communities, the vividness with which they represent the customs, ceremonies, beliefs and everyday lives of their communities as Kitereza admits "from birth to old age and death" (xvii), largely qualifies them as cultural 'insiders' and adds strength to their novels.

Lewis Langness has argued for the 'thicknesses' of ethnographic novels as an advantage that standard ethnographies lack. According to Langness, an ethnographic novel is on the same level with a standard ethnographic account, except that "unlike ordinary ethnography, it does this through the addition of characters and plot" (18). This renders ethnographic novels both substantial and complicated.

I am confronted with an uncomfortable question here. How can I use the novels that focus on particular ethnic groups in a study that maps the nation's socio-economic history and resultant shifts in gender relations? Clement Okafor compares nations with human beings. He argues that, like human beings, nations are conceived, born and grow; and sometimes they are involved in tragedies which threaten their existence. The idea of the nation that shapes this chapter and overall study is younger than the ethnic groups depicted in the two novels. Here, I am also reminded of the insights from Benedict Anderson's definition of the nation as an "imagined community" in his seminal work *Imagined Community*. Yet, the foregrounding of childlessness and secondary infertility, and the relationship between the individual and his

community, emphasize the universal validity and timelessness of the novels. These themes are shared by other ethnic groups in Tanzania. The Hartwigs, in their view of *Myombekere*, note that “it even transcends the islandic ethnic diversity and tribal peculiarities, for he has chosen to stress the individual family, emphasizing the practical wisdom and moral code within societies, thus stressing universal values of the African continent” (169). Such an approach, paradigmatic of the literature that depicts pre-colonial societies, is a basis for the subsequent developments examined in subsequent chapters.

On the Origin of the Family: The ‘Myth’ and Spouse Selection

The myth “How Men and Women Came to Live Together” is Kitereza’s frame story. In this story, Kitereza fictionalizes the origin of the institution of the family, stressing women’s forgiveness and compromise as a reason for them to lose their paradise. The story has it that at the beginning of the world, men and women lived in separate countries ruled separately by the male and female *Omukama*.¹⁰ Realising that the country of women was doing well economically, in particular due to the women’s hunting skills, whereas his was not, the *Omukama* of the country of men sent a convoy of servants to the country of women to negotiate with the Queen about the possible transfer of the women’s hunting prowess. In the course of negotiating and organizing a transfer of hunting expertise, men took advantage of women and advised them to leave their country and join them. For the sake of shelter, each man was given a woman to host and so the King was to host the Queen. Then “you all know what happens when grass comes too near fire” (256). Who is the ‘fire’ and who is the ‘grass’ are the questions that one may need to disentangle. By consuming grass, fire is portrayed to be supreme; however, in the end, the fire is extinguished once the grass is burnt. Although the grass/fire metaphor suggests hierarchy, here it does not equate genders to fire or grass. What is emphasized here is the attraction between dry grass and fire. It symbolizes the sexual attraction between the men and the women and functions as a euphemistic way of saying they engaged in sexual acts such that “since that day in the home of each and every man there was to be heard the soft voice of a woman and in every house there lived together two people: a man and a woman” (256). This marked the beginning of the institution of family and gendered labour that the novel depicts.

It would be illuminating to find out whether the myth is the author’s creation or whether it actually exists among the Kerewe. The author’s faithfulness to or improvisation of the actual

¹⁰Kerewe word for ‘King’ or ‘Queen’, usually a hereditary head of a tribe. In the myth described above, female *Omukama* and male *Omukama* are used to refer to heads of the countries of men and women respectively.

version would help to reveal his inclination regarding gender relations. This is a huge question and therefore a separate research study is needed as it must involve digging deep into and researching extensively on the oral literature of the Kerewe. What is instructive at the moment is that as a frame story, it adds meaning to the overall narrative and, more importantly, to the disentangling of a philosophical question concerning the gendered economics and politics of the origin of the family and familial gender relations.

The myth opens the possibility for the chapter to argue for the politics of bargaining and negotiation. By emphasizing group compromise between men and women, the myth serves Kitereza's purpose of representing the communal nature of the pre-colonial Kerewe and demonstrating the precedence of the community over the individual in the traditional society. Such a myth is, according to John Mbiti, "a means of explaining some actual or imaginary reality. [Myths] are intended to communicate and form the basis for a working explanation about something. Through myths, we are able to dig deep into the psychology of the human past" (*Introduction* 77). As a way of explaining the socio-economics of the Kerewe marriage and family, certain key elements are projected through the myth, for example, the reverence of children and the notion of the wife as an outsider in marriage.

The myth's embracing of the collective or group approach to bargaining becomes Kitereza's means to explain the beginning of the family, which he subsequently abandons in the rest of the narrative in favour of individual negotiation. Scott's theory of power delineates two approaches to bargaining: collective and individual. He, however, sees collective bargaining as utopian and impractical because it entails an organized and systematic action by people aiming to attain the same goal. Kitereza's abandonment of collective bargaining approach is important in that it marks a shift in the mode of negotiation from group to individual. This shift leads me to ask a different set of questions: how does the treatment of the woman as the 'outsider' in the myth and subsequently in the family reflect her position in social relations? And how do male and female characters negotiate their ways?

The logic inherent in the perception of the woman as an 'outsider' in marriage among the depicted pre-colonial Kerewe is reflected in the existence of bridewealth payments, polygynous marriages, arranged or forced marriages, inheritance rights that favour boys, and treatment of widows, in particular their subjection to practices such as sexual cleansing and widow inheritance. All these forms of female oppression are linked to the economics of the pre-colonial period.

The portrayal of Ntulanalwo in *Myombekere* as the head of the family following the death of his father elevates him to the authority of the father for his own sister and head of family over his own mother. Clearly, both his mother and sister are ‘othered’ as outsiders. The patriarchal logic here is that as a wife, Bugonoka married and so joined the Myombekeres as an outsider in the same way her daughter, Bulihwali, was expected to join another family where she would attain the status of an outsider. Ntulanalwo’s inheritance is not only the passage of authority from father to son but also a reallocation of economic resources and social authority from one patriarch to another. The sister-brother or mother-son relationship becomes the superior-subordinate relationship. Whereas Ntulanalwo grows and becomes a paternal figure, Bulihwali is degraded and becomes like his daughter, viewing her own brother as she used to see her deceased father. Bulihwali has no right to achieve the kind of life she aspires to, including the choice of a spouse because she is governed by the rules of Ntulanalwo, as an embodiment of the father figure and patriarchy. As an embodiment of the father figure, Ntulanalwo stands for patriarchal authority over his own sister. According to Adrienne Rich, the power of fathers as an embodiment of patriarchy provides a “system in which men by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, customs [...] determine the part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male” (57). Bulihwali not having the right to freely choose her spouse foregrounds the patriarchal and societal entrapments which as a woman she is expected to endure in this period and in this society. Feminist Elaine Showalter decries such cultural victimization of females. She posits that once the image of the woman as lacking intelligence is internalized, it becomes difficult to change. It goes into her psyche and inferiorises her. Through forced marriage, the woman, Bulihwali in particular, is spoken for: she is not a speaking subject.

Against such entrapments, Ogundipe-Leslie argues for the need to subvert ‘myths’ that ‘imprison’ the African woman. One of these is the myth of the submissive traditional woman “depicted as subordinate, dependent and passive” (*Re-creating* 51). When Bulihwali in *Myombekere* and Isamba in *Kwaheri* challenge the custom of arranged marriage and denial of freedom to choose a spouse respectively, it shows that the female victim can assert herself even in the most patriarchal situations. The failure of Bulihwali’s marriage with Ngundamali in *Myombekere* and the fleeing of Isamba with Matumula in *Kwaheri* are statements that critique the use of physical and emotional threats, punishment and sanctions to ensure compliance from daughters. Read against the pre-colonial socio-economic alignment, the risks entailed by the girls’ defiance abound. The beating Bulihwali is subjected to from her own brother is one among many risks. The Okonkwo-like behaviour displayed by Ntulanalwo

is partly owing to the notion that patriarchs have power to issue or withhold both punishments and resources in the depicted socio-economic period.

Bulihwali and Isamba represent the rebellious subjects, who question the oppressive customs of forced marriage or restrictions on whom to marry. The next form of resistance is what Scott calls “hidden transcripts” (36), which are basically a form of resistance whereby the subordinate hides their genuine feelings of indignation by adopting a posture of deference while clandestinely expressing their resistance. Characters who adopt this form of resistance hide their insubordination for fear of unpleasant repercussions from the power holders. The strategy helps to protect their identity while secretly facilitating attacks and threats to the power holders. These tactics “make no headlines” (Scott 36). The challenge with this form of resistance is that it works best when disguised under fake submissiveness. Another challenge of this framework is that the relationship between the subordinates and power holders must be maintained. This form is best articulated through the representation of the co-wives in Ntulanalwo’s family. This is examined in the subsequent section.

Another perspective from which gendered power relations could be delineated would be analysing submissiveness and rebelliousness as part of the same continuum of character development. In theorising the development of the female character, Franco Moretti contends that what is important is for the female character to attempt to fight, for by fighting she [oppressed female character] sends the message. Whether she resists with hope or despair or she succeeds or does not, she indicates an awareness of existing limitations. By doing so, she creates “a sort of personal campaign by not supporting the existing order but in breaking them” (65). Seeing the lives of the two female characters as a series of ‘struggles’ aimed at subverting patriarchal order, as Moretti proposes above, the authors invite the readers to examine the morality of the characters’ action against their society’s patriarchal blueprint of expectations. The mismatch between what Isamba and Bulihwali consider right and respectable and what their communities consider wrong and unrespectable is the dilemma that the novelists problematize here. It is one of the blind spots in the portrayal of the pre-colonial society, where many scholars have generally argued for an interpretation seeing the individual as being subsumed by the community.

The community’s definition of submission as right and rebelliousness as wrong goes hand in hand with the definition of who is virtuous or amoral in a community (therefore acceptable or unacceptable). With regards to the representation of female characters and submissiveness, Daniel Brett and Joanne Cantor argue about the representation of female characters as

submissive. The submissive ones are generally accepted as good and respectable, while those who challenge the oppressive cultural norms are seen as rebellious. The patriarchal assessment of a woman on a bad/good scale defines submission as virtuous and rebelliousness as unwomanly. Such moral labelling becomes a control mechanism operating to influence characters' reactions towards oppressive situations and relations. Through resistance, Isamba and Bulihwali attempt to challenge these control mechanisms.

The flight motif is the major narrative technique to depict how the two women rebel against patriarchal entrapments. It is mainly through escape from familial and social containment that the subjects can negotiate with or resist their communities' values. The first category is manifested through female characters' running away from oppressive situations. The example given here is that of Isamba who escapes from a culturally constricting community where customs prohibit marrying foreigners. Yet, I argue that this relocation of Isamba might as well be seen as a deliberate narrative strategy; a device to move from Isamba's family, the female side of the story to the male side of the story, thereby underscoring the difference or similarity between the two worlds. It is not important that this relocation produces a lasting solution; what is important is that it enlivens the discussion and the possible ways through which both men and women can bargain or deal with oppressive societal expectations.

The second category has characters that, as a way of bargaining, ply between submissiveness and rebelliousness and eventually graduate in one of the two groups. According to the advocates of the bargaining approach reviewed above, submissiveness or rebelliousness is a matter of choice by the character, provided it is part of their self-realization project. The submissive-rebellious approach that is adopted by Bulihwali transforms her from being a 'dutiful sister'; a sister who listens and unquestioningly obeys patriarchal forced marriage arrangements to the 'undutiful' one, who resists the same arrangement once in the marriage. As a dutiful sister, she adopts Scott's idea of infrapolitics by adopting a low profile while at the same time exploring the weaknesses of the system that disenchants her, which is represented by her brother who marries her off to Ngundamali. According to Scott,

[T]he circumspect struggle waged daily by subordinate groups is, like infrared rays, beyond the visible end of the spectrum. That it should be invisible, as we have seen, is in large part by design – a tactical choice born of a prudent awareness of the balance of power. (*Domination* 183)

It is necessary that she adopts a low profile in order to deal well with her patriarchal brother and husband. This approach is however, short-lived because she soon proves that she is not compatible with Ngundamali. Her inability to live as a submissive wife in a forced marriage leads her to try open resistance, thus becoming an undutiful wife – undutiful to her patriarchal husband, but dutiful to herself. Scott calls this the “speak-truth-to-power” approach, which is a direct resistance to power holders and “carries the force of a symbolic declaration of war” (8), entailing personal danger. The violent beatings and verbal abuse she suffers from her brother is the price she pays for defying the patriarchal authority symbolically reserved in her brother as the head of the family. In the end, it is Bulihwali’s inner self – the id, which wins:

Bulihwali then lived her life of a free woman [...] She hadn’t been divorced for a year when suitors flocked in the home, men of every kind, from white ones to red ones [...] and our Bulihwali from morning till sunset was escorting out of her brother’s home one suitor after another [...] after a while she selected from among her suitors the man, between whom there was a mutual agreement, a man she felt would be a good husband for her. (656)

The quest for freedom of choice and decision-making is the core of the above quotation. By arguing for passion and affection between the couple, Bulihwali stresses the importance of looking at marriage primarily as a social relationship between husband and wife. Her definition of marriage, however, defies the economic definition of traditional perceptions of marriage—production of children. The question that one has to grapple with here is why does Bulihwali accept such an arranged marriage in the first place? First, I argue that this is a kind of *trial* marriage, a traditional version of modern day ‘cohabitation’ before formal marriage. I use this to stress the idea of character development from being submissive to rebellious.

Bulihwali’s strategy is shaped by the socio-economic positioning of her brother inherited from his father. Ntulanalwo’s gender and position in the kinship means that as a son he inherits the social and economic position of his dead father while his sister and his mother inherit nothing from their father and husband respectively. Ntulanalwo’s relations with his sister and his mother almost suggest that they are, like other properties, inherited by him. The implication of this social positioning and the gender privileges accorded to Ntulanalwo means that he can now control the allocation of family resources, decide and arrange marriage for his sister and determine the kind of life his mother can lead since they depend on him. Economically, Ntulanalwo takes advantage and uses his sister as an asset by negotiating high

bridewealth from her aspirant, Ngundamali. Inheritance as a socio-economic issue produces a hierarchised social structure, with Ntulanalwo at the top via inheritance. This is to say that even before his father's death, he was considered as a 'temporary socio-economic dependant' because he would one day become a household head by marrying and so become independent himself. His mother and his sister are permanent dependants.

Seen from yet another angle, portraying Buliwhali's transgression and analysing her marriage with Ngundamali as a trial one, Kitereza critiques the male-dominated social economy. By portraying Buliwhali's marriage with Ngundamali as a kind of trial marriage, he accommodates rebellious women like her in an essentially male-controlled social economy. There is lack of evidence of trial-marriages in pre-colonial Africa. Benezet Bujo and Laurent Magesa, however, highlight the general trial nature of traditional marriages in Africa. In a separate study, Magesa argues that the trial nature of traditional African marriages was such that "the conclusion of the marriage through the birth of a child [meant that the] husband and wife belonged completely to one another, and the bond between the two families and communities sealed" (127). The nature and the essence of this form of traditional marriage was production of children, while personal relationship between the two partners was secondary. Thus, for Bujo, the "testing of the fertility of the woman remained the motivation" (107) of traditional African marriages.

What the traditional definition of a 'trial marriage' by the above scholars suggests is that spousal affection (or the relation between husband and wife) was not important; rather, fecundity was all that mattered. To interpret Buliwhali's acceptance of arranged marriage as a trial-marriage necessarily calls for disqualifying it against the modern notions of trial-marriage as 'cohabitation' or a form of dating where partners spend more time together. If in the traditional societies depicted in the novels, a woman's infertility automatically validates her divorce, there is every reason to view Buliwhali's acceptance of marriage as a trial union – a trial that is meant to satisfy herself regarding the suitability of, and compatibility with her husband. To this point then, it is safe to argue that marriages in the depicted traditional society begin as trial pending proof of fertility as a permanent admission of a wife and an important contribution to the social economy of the family.

Infertility: a Socio-economic Disability

In *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*, Rich distinguishes motherhood as a patriarchal institution from the everyday role of women as mothers. As an institution, motherhood “aims at ensuring that all women shall remain under male control” (1). For her, motherhood is equated with victimhood while for Barbara Rothman, the link between motherhood and patriarchy is that “it is women’s motherhood that men must control to maintain patriarchy” (21). In this section, I argue that the portrayals of both infertility and sub-optimal fertility revolve around the twin pillars of production and reproduction which interlock and underscore the assumption that childlessness and few children are both social and economic disabilities and liabilities in the pre-colonial societies depicted.

Through the analysis of the representation of the ordeals of Isamba-Matumula and Bugonoka-Myombekere marriages, I depart from Rich and Rothman and argue that in the fictionalized communities, motherhood is neither dreaded nor are there efforts by the characters to relinquish it. The characters do not dread it because seen from the point of view of African feminism and in the words of Nnaemeka, “they know that they are also the beneficiaries of the rewards of mothering” (*The Politics* 5). The institution of motherhood is therefore monitored and/or controlled by the larger community, including women themselves. The interest of the community in monitoring this institution exists because “women are labourers producing the precious products” (Rothman 21), which the narrator in Myombekere equates with the “resurrection of earth” (1).

The stigmatization of a childless Bugonoka in *Myombekere* and a sub-fecund Isamba in *Kwaheri* is a result of the society’s functionalist approach to life which perceives men and women as bodies with special socio-economic roles. The functionalism approach regards society as a system of interconnected parts. The community as a system has needs. As a part of this system, an individual is considered as a functional body as long as they are able to fulfil their obligation. The inability of Isamba and Bugonoka to meet their socio-economic role of procreation renders them functionless – so functionless that in the Swahili version of *Myombekere*, Bugonoka is referred to as *mama bure* (a useless mother) and a socially disabled person.

The experience of childlessness and the miseries it brings to the characters might be read as representative of other cultures in Tanzania or elsewhere in Africa. Flora Nwapa’s novel *Efuru* (1966), which is set in Nigeria in the sixties, interrogates the same theme. In this novel,

Efuru, the female protagonist, is considered by other female characters as a ‘man’. She is a ‘man’ because “she could not reproduce” (23). She has failed to prove her femaleness. Although she is respected for her ability in trading, she is stigmatized due to her inability to reproduce. One of the characters mocks her thus:

Can a bag of money go for an errand for you? Can a bag of money look after you in your old age? Can a bag of money mourn for you when you are dead? A child is more valuable than money. (23)

The foregoing quotation also mirrors the views of the depicted Kerewe and Nyamwezi concerning the value they attach to children. Emphasized in the quote is the labour that one gets by having children. It also emphasizes the extra-economic value of children. Children act as securities for their parents in old age. Happiness in life is equated with having children. Secondly, it represents female-on-female stigmatization. The portrayal of the woman-on-woman castigation in the two novels and those of the female characters in *Efuru* counter Rich and Rothman’s idea that the policing of this institution is done by men. Nnaemeka insists:

The oppression of women is not simply a masculinist flaw [...] it also entails woman-on-woman violence that is often the outcome of institutionalized, hierarchical female spaces that make women victims and collaborators in patriarchal violence. (*The Politics* 19)

Here Nnaemeka links the woman-on-woman stigma with patriarchal socialization, a ‘web’ in which women participate and by means of which they help promote patriarchal violence. There is another hierarchy here: normal women are those who have achieved reproductive normalcy and the abnormal ones are those that have missed motherhood or have suboptimal fertility. If the ‘abnormal’ wives and women experience such stigma, one wonders what happens to their husbands. To what extent do the husbands share the consequences?

Theorists of stigma, Erving Goffman and Arnold Birenbaum, have introduced the concept of ‘courtesy stigma’ – a stigma one attains by associating with someone who has a stigmatizing attribute. Accordingly, discrediting a person in possession of an attribute considered abnormal alienates him. It is their support for their wives and eventual defiance of the community’s directives that cause the husbands to be stigmatized. If their wives are seen as unnatural and unwomanly, the husbands are also viewed as unnatural and unmanly. For the husbands, it

causes their their masculinity to be questioned. A disgruntled old man in *Kwaheri* tells Matumula:

Hivi wewe una dosari gani? Waijua jadi yetu watu wa nchi hii. Mwanaume barabara mwenye uwezo sharti awe na wake watatu au wane ili aweze kujaliwa baraka ya watoto wengi. Mbona unatutia aibu kwa kuishi kama masikini. Kwa nini usiangaze angaze macho ukajilimbikizia hao viumbe ili ukidhi hamu yako na tamaa ya watoto? Je hujui kuwa wanawake ni utajiri? Sasa kwa nini ung'ang'anie kuishi na mwanamke mmoja aliyefaulu kukuzalia kitoto kimoja tu? (12)

[What's wrong with you? You know very well that for a man of your stature, our society requires that you have three or four wives so that you can have many children. You live like a poor man; you are a disgrace to us. Why don't you look for these creatures (women) so that you can get more children and quench your sexual thirst? Don't you know that women are wealth? Why then do you want to continue to live with a woman who has only given you a single child?].

Here, the old man hints at the link between children and polygyny as symbols of wealth in this period. Childlessness and a small number of issues are regarded as sufficient grounds for divorcing a wife or entering into a polygynous marriage. I note the choice of words by the speaker in the above quotation. Instead of using a respectable and polite reference to *mtoto mmoja* (–one child), he uses the diminutive version, *kitoto kimoja*. The diminutive prefix 'ki' represents size, quality or value. It is used to add meaning to non-human beings. The use of *kitoto kimoja* above implies that a single child is like having no child. Economically, women, (as the character believes), are wealth because they produce their societies' most valued wealth, children. Matumula is being stigmatized because of his reluctance to achieve normalcy as defined by his society. He therefore becomes abnormal and a socially disabled person, as does his wife.

One finds that suboptimal fertility is projected in *Kwaheri* to be a woman's problem. By having low progeny, her respectability in the family and kinship group is also lowered. The scapegoating of the woman for a 'problem' she has no control over points to the general ignorance of the laws of reproduction in this period, which is facilitated by the patriarchal

socialization that generally scapegoats women and promotes the men to the helm. The question that the villagers need to ask themselves is simple: Does Isamba's fertility at the age of 20 necessarily guarantee her fertility at 40, for example? A female relative to Myombekere in *Myombekere* represents this societal ignorance:

You know very well that a man is never sterile; is never in need of fertility drugs: the only fertility drug a male person needs is the bow and arrow of his manhood. If you court another woman and marry again, such a real man as you cannot remain for long without children. (4)

This character's view of infertility is also shared by Bugonoka, the victim of childlessness in *Myombekere*, who tells her husband that "you are a man: if you marry another woman, you can have children without any problem" (198). Kitereza portrays this thinking as a product of socialization and cultural discourses that blame the woman and protect the man. He attributes it to the general ignorance about the biology of reproduction. Furthermore, the wedding symbolism also helps to reinforce the groom's ability to procreate. By using the bow and the arrow as symbols of manhood which bridegrooms carry on the wedding day, the narrator reasons that any man who can marry and consummate marriage can have children. The symbolism of the bow and the arrow is part of the dominant discourse that privileges the man in a society where societal rites such as marriage ceremonies are also tilted in favour of the man as reproductively capable and acceptable.

In the absence of scientific explanations of childlessness, what solution does the novel offer? Sociologists and anthropologists have explained the recourse to witchcraft as a way of explaining events and problems in traditional societies. Evans Pritchard's study of witchcraft in Africa, in particular among the Azande of Sudan, shows how witchcraft was understood as the best explanation for unfortunate conditions such as childlessness. He notes that through witchcraft, traditionalists try to understand their situations and feel they understand their worlds. The mastery with which Kitereza uses this approach is exemplary because it does not only challenge society's view of childlessness as a woman's problem, but it also highlights the reliance of the society on witchcraft to solve problems. Here again, Kitereza presents himself as modern in that he takes a modern approach to solving a couple's childlessness. His mouthpiece, Myombekere, argues that "barrenness can befall anybody" (198). By arguing in this way, he represents a male character that questions the victimization of infertile women. To make this case clear, together with his wife, they are subjected to the diviner's

investigation. The process is both absorbing and educating: the healer takes the reader through a conversation that puts to test the bow-and-arrow symbol of Myombekere's maleness. The proof that neither the husband nor the wife is infertile contrasts the views of the larger community which sees childlessness as the wife's problem, thereby subverting the dominant discourse. According to Kibuguma's findings, the major problem afflicting Bugonoka are the *Ihuzi* worms – the “worms which kill eggs in a woman's womb” (233). Here, Kitereza is not far from contemporary scientific explanation. Nicola, Desmond, Audrey, Prost and Daniel Wight in “Managing Risk through Treatment Seeking in Rural North-Western Tanzania” mention *Ihuzi* worms as one of the categories of intestinal worms that the Sukuma of north-western Tanzania associate with death of children before or during delivery. Kitereza shows that traditional remedies approximate scientific explanation thereby shooting down society's explanation. Yet by seeking remedy from traditional healers, the Myombekeres are succumbing to societal pressures.

The couples' misfortunes do not bother them in the first place because, for them, love is the most important aspect of marriage. This raises another question: who desires children? To Kitereza and Mapalala, it is the community which needs children more than individual couples, thus justifying the community's primary concerns with Bugonoka's childlessness and Isamba's number of children. This suggests that in the context of the novels, having children has nothing to do with parental love and natural desire for procreation, but is rather a desire to fulfil societal obligations. The quashing of this thinking by Myombekere and Matumula in favour of intimacy and warmth between husband and wife emphasizes the virtue of love as more important than having or not having children. By prioritizing intimacy, they automatically counter the dominant discourse that sees marriage as specifically meant for child bearing.

The representation of marriage and children as inseparable in the two communities portrays infertility as a ‘master status’, having exceptional importance and overshadowing all other statuses. In the case of Efuru highlighted above, her inability to procreate is her ‘master status’ which has not only redefined her position and relations with her community, but it also renders all her economic achievements useless before society. Isamba's love for her husband and his people are nothing as long as she has one child. Even with Bugonoka's four premature births, she is considered a *mama bure*, a useless mother. The woman in this period is either good/useful or bad/useless depending on whether or the extent to which she fulfils her major career, that is, childbearing. In terms of characters' alternatives, there are only three options:

first the characters must endure living with their master statuses; that is, accepting it as their lot. Second, it means struggling to redeem their reproductive normalcy; and the third is attempting to challenge their societies' perception of their master statuses. The two novels represent two different attitudes in male subjects with regard to the solution of the problem they find themselves in. There is Myombekere, the submissive subject, and Matumula, the ambivalent subject. When Myombekere's wife is taken back by her parents following the abuses she suffers from her sisters-in-law, the novel creates a character that intelligently uses his submissiveness to bargain. In order to woo back the wife, he must pay an appeasement fee. My argument here is that Myombekere's appeasement fee is evidence of submissiveness and a form of bargaining, whereby he bows to societal pressure by conceding to the demands of the in-laws and society. Here, concession becomes a form of adaptability. Myombekere's concession is important for him to restart his married life and explore the remedies of the problem. The appeasement strategy that Myombekere chooses enables him to explore other alternatives. This giving-in to society's demands is Kitereza's way of saying the community is more powerful than the individual and that Myombekere's wish to redress the infertility of his wife after the intervention of his people is to say that he is trying to avoid confrontation with his society.

The helplessness of Myombekere against the laws of his community accounts for a series of bargains he makes following his wife's childlessness. The successive trips he makes to his in-laws to retrieve his wife; his struggle to get the six pots of appeasement beer to pay for her return; and the struggle to treat his wife's barrenness, all indicate a sense of bowing to community's prescriptions by a person who is generally expected to be privileged. The dualistic approach used by Myombekere to make sure that he retains both Bugonoka and his community's support emphasizes the need to strike a balance when negotiating with the oppressor. I call this approach 'strategic submissiveness', a means to attain her goal through a display of a fake posture of deference.

Mapalala in *Kwaheri* takes on a different approach, where he portrays Matumula as yielding to societal pressure at the expense of his wife, whom he still loves. Bowing to the pressure, he chooses to publicly display himself as a fierce and tough husband in order to please his viewers and show that he is still one of the traditional 'men' who abuse and beat their wives at will. This behaviour underscores the tension between public and private display of society's expectations. The public in *Kwaheri* requires of a husband to be a strict patriarch who disciplines and if possible abuses and beats up his wife. The villagers think that either

“Isamba anadeka kwa sababu hajawahi kupigwa na mumewe” (49). [She is spoilt because her husband has never beaten her], or “Matumula amerogwa na mkewe” (19) [He has been bewitched by his wife or given a love potion to make him meek]. Too weak to withstand the meddling of his families and community, he chooses to please his people publicly but his soul is against it. When he decides to act like a ‘real husband’ by beating her, there is relief among the villagers: “Leo Matumula amefanya la maana. Heshima ya Mwanamke lazima apate kipigo” (49). [Today Matumula has done a great thing; wife-beating restores a woman’s respect to her husband]. Again, the contrast between what Matumula does in order to demonstrate his manly character in public is the opposite of his love. This is an example of a male character being bulldozed by the very system that is expected to favour him.

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann in *The Social Construction of Reality* argue that people construct culture and use it as a guide to shape how they behave. When this culture has been created and internalized through socialization and enculturation, it is normatized while deviant subcultures are marginalized and oppressed. The case for Matumula is an example of how men are stigmatized because they are not following what is expected of them as men. His fear of being counted as falling outside the mainstream masculine view of what a husband should be stems also from the socialization around what is expected of a husband in the traditional community. Yet by being a hypocrite, he fools himself and the society. This pretension is an indicator that men must sometimes find ways to bargain with patriarchal arrangements even though they may not represent their genuine feelings. Similar behaviour is shown by Okonkwo in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*. Okonkwo kills his adoptive son (Ikemefuna) because he does not want to be thought weak, a way of showing that he is a ‘man’, but he knows it is wrong. In terms of gender relations, Okonkwo’s beating of one of his wives during the week of peace is a demonstration of his hegemonic masculinity. Matumula’s display of macho husband by conduct to the public, which contrasts with his private feelings, is also an example of submission to the community’s pressure. The societal pressure has created in him an apparent desire to hurt his wife. He is forced to be a bully. Ken Rigby identifies other characteristics of bullying behaviour; they include performing a hurtful action, evident enjoyment of inflicting hurt by the aggressor, powerlessness of the abused and a sense of oppression on the part of victim. The heartless violence he commits on his innocent wife is a social reaction, or at most, intended to disguise himself as a macho man. It means that he is not a macho and a bully by nature, but that he is a ‘strategic’ bully, who pre-meditates harassment of the weaker sex with the aim of making them feel humiliated as a way

of pleasing his spectators. The challenge of this approach is that there is a possibility for the person to be carried away by the behaviour and the praises from his community.

From the foregoing analysis, the representation of infertility as a socio-economic disability indicates that its stigma is shared by the husbands as well, especially when they stand in support of their wives against their communities' appeal to divorce them. Since stigma by a childless woman is incurred because procreation takes place in her body, the analysis has been tilted in favour of what Goffman and Birenbaum above call 'courtesy stigma' that afflict the two husbands. In this way, I have demonstrated that husbands, too, stand a chance of being victimized; therefore, they also devise mechanisms to negotiate their destinies. They strategize on the twin methods of submission and rebelliousness or sometimes combine both with varying levels of success. The insistence on bearing many children and polygyny as a solution is linked to society's economics in that having many children means more labour and more labour means more wealth. Secondly, polygyny is an expression of status and wealth. The mere fact that a man can afford to pay bridewealth for more than one wife and maintain them indicates his economic status in the community. This is echoed by the association of barns of yams and titles with polygyny and many children in *Things Fall Apart*. Okonkwo, we are told was "cut out for great things" because he is a "wealthy farmer and had two barns full of yams, and had just married his third wife" (11). Nwakibie is another "wealthy man in Okonkwo's village who had three huge barns, nine wives and thirty children" (21). Okonkwo and Nwakibie's statuses and wealth are gauged by polygyny - number of wives, number of children, and barns of yams. Like Okonkwo, Matumula is an economically successful person in the clan. Unlike Okonkwo, he is a social failure because he does not have many wives and many children¹¹. Such a portrayal captures the intricate economics of the pre-colonial societies. Here, the twin pillars of gender relations, which are production and reproduction, intersect.

In both novels, the wives are abused by either the husband or the members of the kinship or even the villagers. Divorce and or polygyny seem to be the solution. In view of this situation in marriages, the next section examines the representation of available checks and balances in marriage, in particular the institution of bridewealth.

¹¹ See also Goretti Kyomuhendo's *The First Daughter* (1976) a novel by a Ugandan female writer and set in Uganda. In this novel, Kyamanywa, a die-hard patriarch observes that "women and children are a yardstick to measure a man's wealth" (23).

Checking and Balancing Gender Relations through Bridewealth

The relationship between bridewealth and gender inequality is a well-studied subject. Bertha Koda and Magdalena Ngaiza, Tanzania Gender Networking Programme, and Reea Hinkkanen among others, provide useful analyses of the subject in Tanzania's case. Margaret Hay and Sharon Stichter, John Mbiti, Alyward Shorter, Molar Ogundipe-Leslie provide a general discussion of the practice in the African situation. Against the practice is the argument that bridewealth payment is tantamount to an economic transaction which is why in some cases it is alternatively called bride price. It is seen as a commodification of the woman and may contribute to unequal relations between the husband and the wife. In reading Buchi Emecheta's *The Bride Price* (1978), Akachi Ezeigbo praises Emecheta because through critiquing the practice, she "exposes the injustices lined up against women so that society could be restructured in a more equitable manner" (6). In the depicted period, bridewealth provides the most straightforward example of economic codification of a woman's labour. Rather than rehearsing the negatives of the practice, I contribute by examining how the institution of bridewealth can be read as a possible site of negotiation or redefinition of gendered economies. The argument is that the practice is portrayed as enhancing checks and balances and regulating the behaviour of both male and female characters. This is a case where economics (through bridewealth) regulate gender relations in the family.

Marriage in the depicted traditional African communities symbolizes the union between two lineages.¹² This is reflected in the way various members of the kinship group are involved in arranging marriages. Through patriarchal connectivity, the members contribute to bridewealth. The implication of the connectivity as reflected in kinship contributions to marriage payments is that even after marriage men must maintain relationship with and loyalty to their own kin groups. This is to say married men have rights and responsibilities in their kin groups. Contributing to the bridewealth is one of the rights which in turn makes it possible for them to exercise some forms of social control over the couple. In doing so they also protect some of the claims they have on the couple which is reproducing the kinship.

In *Myombekere* not only is Myombekere asked by the father of the prospective bride to go and seek consent from the relatives of the bride, but he is also made to mobilize bridewealth from his relatives for his son's marriage. The donation of bridewealth by the parents of the groom and the subsequent sharing of it among the relatives of the bride is Kitereza's way of

¹²See Thomas Biedelman (1971) for insights into marriage and kinship, bride price, divorce, and polygyny in traditional Tanzanian communities.

emphasizing the communal nature of marriage. The action of donating and sharing bridewealth enables members of Myombekere's kinship group to influence decisions in the family, and in turn, marital partners are restrained from misbehaving towards each other. Through the payment of bridewealth, Kitereza indicates that new relations of production are produced whereby kinship members or parents exercise some forms of indirect control over the couples.

The effects of bridewealth in regulating the character's behaviour are considered from the perspective of divorce. The rule among the Kererwe is that either the husband or the wife can initiate divorce. If the wife initiates divorce, bridewealth has to be returned to the groom's parents. If bridewealth refund is one of the best exit strategies, one may want to know how many female characters can afford this alternative. Who pays for these refunds? And to what extent can women influence such a decision? These questions challenge the viability of this option because of the position of women with regard to refunding bridewealth, especially as they do not own resources of their own in the depicted period. The option can only work if the woman has the support of her parents, which may not always be the case. It is through others that the woman's fate is once again decided. Therefore, while I stress that this can be a good area for women to negotiate their way out of oppressive marriages, it is important to be aware of its limitations as it essentially depends on the goodwill of others.

The limitation is further exhibited in the fact that in the depicted traditional husbands do not initiate divorce for several reasons. Firstly, by initiating a divorce, they lose both the bridewealth they paid and the woman. In this case, they would be double losers. Secondly, Kitereza and Mapalala indicate that for men, there are other ways of solving the problem of unsuccessful marriages, and one of them is polygyny. These two factors indicate that retaining bridewealth is a good option for women to resort to should they wish to exit marriages.

On the other hand, if a woman is ill-treated or physically abused by her husband, she has the right to return to her parents and her parents could prevent her from returning to her husband until the husband has paid a special fine. In *Myombekere*, we are introduced to a special appeasement fee that Myombekere must pay in order to redeem his wife. This he must do even if he does not himself mistreat the wife. If he fails to pay it, the woman may be retained for life and the husband loses both bridewealth and the wife. Although these may not necessarily work in all circumstances, there is a chance that they are likely to shape some relations between husbands and wives and can be a better option for women to negotiate their exit from oppressive marriages.

The other idea regarding the practice of bridewealth as providing marital checks and balances manifests itself in Kitereza's depiction of the gradualness in the way the payment is done. Marriage in the depicted traditional societies is meant for child bearing. It is therefore not complete until a woman conceives. This is the reason for the portrayal of bridewealth in *Myombekere* as a constellation of items paying for different marriage items and at different times in the course of the marriage. According to the depiction of the Kerewe, bridewealth is not a one-off event; it goes through different stages during which possible evaluation-type processes occur. These evaluation-type processes are important because they give couples time to rethink their marriages against the very ideals of their societies.

For Kitereza, it is not important to show how bridewealth can be a source of inequality between husband and wife. What is important is the way bridewealth payment provides an opportunity for female characters to negotiate their ways out of oppressive marriages. In this regard, he portrays bridewealth refund as one of the checks and balances that not only protects the woman but also demonstrates the utter helplessness of the husband in case he mistreats the wife or initiates a divorce. For this to work, he proposes that it is important that the parents of the bride should keep a close eye on their daughter's life with the husband. In this way, bridewealth serves as a control mechanism, which both sides of marriage observe. The fact that Kitereza shows only women taking on this option suggests that it is one of the best options they have so long as they have the support of their parents or relatives.

Resistance/Bargaining in the Family and the Husband-Wife Relations

In her introduction to *Re-creating Ourselves*, Ogundipe-Leslie asks, "Are African women voiceless or do we fail to look for their voices where we may find them, in the sites and forms in which these voices are uttered? [...] in what sites do the women express these emotional rebellions?" This is important, because "women also speak in words where we do not hear them. They also speak in silences" (11). In the same vein, in his book *The Power of African Cultures*, Toyin Falola critiques western scholars for replicating the negative image of the African woman by "revealing only the frightening aspects, painting women as savages who are exploited by men [...] as powerless victims, human beings no better than slaves of old". He asks: "Are African men evil and the African woman so docile as to tolerate evil?" (250).

Falola and Ogundipe-Leslie invite us to focus on different strategies women use to resist patriarchy. I use Scott's idea of "weapons of the weak" – explored in the same title – to examine the representation of female characters' recourse to love potions as a way of taming

their husbands. Scott's "weapons of the weak" highlights the relations between the masters and the subordinates and the different ways in which the subordinates resist oppression in particular through 'behind-the-scenes' forms of resistance. Such forms of resistance are like "infrared rays, beyond the visible end of the spectrum" and their invisibility is "by design – a tactical choice, born out of a prudent awareness of the balance of power" (183). The concept of infrapolitics reinforces the idea of hidden transcripts. Hidden transcripts is a "discourse that takes place 'offstage' beyond direct observation by power holders [and] consists of those offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript" (5), Scott theorises. This is to say, the subordinates use "disguise, deception, and indirection while maintaining an outward impression [...] of willing, even enthusiastic consent" (17).

Like Scott, Falola and Ogundipe-Leslie argue that there are many strategies that women (as the subordinated in the depicted period) employ that take the offstage form of resistance. As a coping strategy in Ntulanalwo's polygamous marriage in *Myombekere*, Netoga is advised by her mother to "pretend to be a fool who doesn't see or know anything and stay" (652), a strategy summarized by Huma Ibrahim as "silent resistance without valorizing it" (154). She is advised that this pretence is the best way to tame her husband while at the same time controlling him through the use of love potions as an offstage mechanism. The end result of love potions as Margrethe Silberschmidt has observed in the context of Kisii, Kenya is to "weaken their thinking" in order for the wife to "command and direct the husband" (98). This is seen as a form of performance where the wives try to create an impression of a traditional submissive wife while in fact they intend to rule the home. This links well with Scott's view of resistance as a 'performance' where the subordinates perform submission in public and subversion in private. The use of love potions falls within what Scott calls "resistance without protest" because a "vast range of what counts – or should count – as resistance involves no overt protest" and is always "less mechanical" ("Resistance" 417).

The association of love potions with the kitchen is a pointer to Ogundipe-Leslie's call that we need to look for "women's voices in women's sites". The kitchen, as she puts it, is traditionally one of the women's spaces where "women speak, often in the absence of men" (11). The use of love potions by the wives of Ntulanalwo in *Myombekere* is an example of the hidden transcripts of resistance characterized by the discrepancy between what these women do in front of the husbands and what they do behind their backs. The fear of stigma and being considered rebellious on the one hand and their utter powerlessness before patriarchy on the

other necessitates recourse to the hidden transcript model. In describing Ntulanalwo's polygynous home, the narrator puts it thus:

With three wives, Ntulanalwo's home was now his poor man's kingdom, where he was a real sovereign, where every wish of his was at once a command, where his three wives were forever outdoing each other to win his favour [...] each one of them was determined to be his favourite wife and so each and every one of them was daily looking for love potions. (651-652)

Three things are highlighted in the description of the above polygynous marriage: the power of the husband; relations among the wives; and the wives' different strategies to tame their husband. The economics here is that in such societies, the husband is the head and controls family resources. As a 'manager' he can use 'favours' as a way of controlling his wives. Apart from economic favours, other favours include intimacy. Among the fictionalized Kerewe, the quarrels often revolve around the husband's inability to distribute these favours evenly among the wives. By portraying Ntulanalwo as having more love for the youngest wife, Kitereza challenges the ability of polygynous husbands to be fair in their relationships with their wives. His love for the youngest wife illustrates that much as Ntulanalwo is the object of competition, he himself is, in fact, rendered helpless as each of the three wives tries to pull him to her side. On the one hand, this portrays the husband as a privileged character since wives compete to please him. On the other hand, Kitereza also highlights the potential consequences he is likely to suffer as an object of competition. The consequences come through the use of love potions. In the world created by Kitereza, the potions are not only powerful but they account for the resultant powerlessness of Ntulanalwo in that he keeps on changing his commitment between his three wives.

The belief in love concoctions and spells as an offstage strategy to tame husbands is also echoed by Mapalala in his depiction of the response of Matumula's kin to his behaviour and relations with his wife. As an economically successful person, Matumula is appointed to be *mtemi*, a chief, but when he refuses, the elders associate it with love potions. She has bewitched him:

Watu wote wanataka kukufanya mtemi, lakini umekataa. Hayo yanatokea kwa sababu ya huyo mkeo aliyekupumbaza kwa madawa. Huyo mwanamke ni mchawi [...] ndiyo kamba iliyokufunga. (36)

[We have appointed you to be our chief but you have refused. All this is because of your wife who has bewitched you. Your wife is a witch. She is the cause of all the problems].

The dimension of the love potion as a resort to taming the husband emphasized here is that of disconnecting the husband from his kinship. The elders' logic is that Isamba operates on the assumption that the closer Matumula is to his kinsmen through leadership, the less control she will have over him. This becomes the second perception of the control that the wife can exert over the husband through recourse to witchcraft.

The parallel reference to the use of love spells by both Kitereza and Mapalala is characteristic of the traditional strategies that wives use in order to control their husbands in both monogamous and polygynous marriages. I am arguing here that love spells are very common in Tanzania and they are openly advertised. Whether they work or not is not my concern. It is enough here to suggest that they constitute people's perception of checking on and balancing power between husbands and wives. Silberschmidt's analysis of the same in Kisii, Kenya indicates how they are relied upon by women as a source of control and making husbands behave like "frightened children who hide when visitors come", whereas some husbands are "made completely apathetic" (98).

In the same way, Kitereza has created a world where potions are used, relied upon and even dreaded. Again, the skill with which he selects the customs and beliefs is amazing and yet, at times, it is characterized by ambivalence. At one occasion, Myombekere, the implied author, critiques the idea of rain-making and its practitioners as fake because he witnesses the failure of one rain-maker. However, he does not pass the same judgement on love potions and other practitioners such as diviners and healers because they work in Ntulanalwo's polygamous family and Bugonoka's sterility is cured. So, for him it is the effectiveness of a particular practice that matters most. Here it is important to stress Kitereza's commitment to representing the past. While according to Mulokozi, the novel can be read as autobiographical in that the fictional Myombekere represents much of Kitereza's experience as a husband, the facts that unlike Myombekere he never consulted the traditional healers and never married a second wife indicate that he is "staunchly modern and more progressive in outlook and practice" (Mulokozi 319) than the community whose past he seeks to record. Such then is the problem of writing in retrospect and at the crossroad of cultures.

The Tanzanian experience of love potion advertisements generally shows that winning the husband's love is central to love potions. That is the reason they are called 'love' potions. But underneath, it is reduced to 'controlling' a husband or making him 'docile.' Yet there is the potential to use it otherwise, for example, in case one wants a divorce. My argument here is that through the umbrella term of love potions a lot of evils have also been committed. The question to ask here is why then do Ntulanalwo's wives resort to the 'love' or 'infatuatory' quality of love potions? As a way of bargaining, their aim is to maintain the relationship with their husbands. Looked at from another perspective, it is the weapon of the weak in a society where women are powerless and love potions provide the best method of controlling their husbands— a goal that is hard to achieve, should they wish to use open methods. The resort to infatuatory love potions is connected to the fact that once love is assured, then it becomes easy to deal with other problems of inequalities.

The '*mume bwege*' metaphor¹³ – the silly/docile husband – has been used to refer to those men who submit to the effect of love potions. The social depiction of both Matumula and Myombekere as stupid and push-over husbands as encapsulated in the *mume bwege* metaphor, runs parallel to the idea of *mama bure* – a useless mother referred to in Kitereza's Swahili version of *Myombekere*. What is instructive here is the disparity in the causes for such labelling. First, the labels speak to the wider gendering of the social economy where the man is expected to be the controller of the family including the wife and not being a figurehead. The Swahili language imprint suggested here is that Matumula and Myombekere exist between two ends: stupidity (*ubwege*) and uselessness (*ubure*). The irony, however, is that they earn these labels for not taking action against their wives' secondary infertility, something that is beyond their power. While the husbands earn this label because they listen to their hearts by loving their wives and conceding some of the "patriarchal dividend" to use Connell's concept, the women are taunted and considered useless because of a problem which they themselves have not created.

The use of love potions is an example of a hidden mechanism to control the husband. It indicates how voicelessness or silence can mean different things especially when expressed by the subaltern. The mistake for the patriarchs would be to equate speech with power and silence with disempowerment. Isamba in *Kwaheri* takes insults and abuses from her

¹³The metaphor derives from a song by a Tanzanian popular *Bongo* flavour artist Bushoke '*Mume Bwege*' which was a hit in 2010. In this song, the *mume bwege* – silly husband – does everything not expected of a husband in this society, such as cooking, washing dishes and clothes, and other house chores. He has no say over his wife including access to sex and even his own children.

husband's extended family members and she accepts them as her fate; that is the price she is paying for having transgressed against her mother. She believes "Hii ndiyo radhi ya mama yangu. Laiti ningemsikiliza" (48). [This is my mother's curse. I wish I had listened to her]. Isamba is suffering from double social stigmata: inability to reproduce optimally and the feeling of being an outsider, disowned and therefore, having no place to call home to run to. Silence becomes her way to cope with the difficult situation. Having explained Isamba in this way, I end up asking: does her silence indicate powerlessness?

Uchendu, a male character in *Things Fall Apart* warns us that one should "never kill a man [or a woman] who says nothing" (129). The men of Abame, he attests, were stupid to kill a white man because by not speaking they thought he was powerless. The price for killing a man who says nothing is that the whole of Abame village was almost wiped out. To make his point, he treats his audience with the story of the 'Mother Kite.' In this story the Mother Kite asks her daughter to return the duckling to her mother because when she swooped on it, its mother "said nothing." It just walked away. The point is "there is something ominous behind silence" (130), Uchendu concludes.

Like the mother of the duckling, Isamba is silent as her husband's people and later on her husband mistreats her due to her secondary infertility. This tendency of blaming women for the mistakes they have not committed can have a devastating impact on their psyches. Feminists Elaine Showalter, Rachel Maines, and Jennifer Smith have described the relationship between patriarchal oppression and hysteria, a disease that is considered female. They argue that rather than explaining hysteria biologically, a shift needs to be made whereby patriarchal deprivations and oppression can be seen as causes of female hysteria and depression. Sigmund Freud's work, *The Aetiology of Hysteria*, also theorises hysteria as a female disease, but goes a step further from questioning its earlier conceptions as a pathological disease to seeing it as a social one. Increasingly, this disease has been associated with suicide or attempted suicide as a result of violence and disturbed emotions.

By explaining the posture of silence shown by the Mother Duckling as both 'strange' and 'threatening', the mother Kite is right and I argue that we can understand Isamba's silence as equally potent. What the duckling's mother in Uchendu's story above could have done is open to speculation. What is clear however is that silence is fearful, as Nnaemeka notes, "silence can hide power" ("Gender Relations" 145). Isamba's emotional disturbance because of her violent husband and abusive community makes her hysterical and results in her loss of self-control to the extent that she entertains thoughts of suicide. This representation of female

characters that adopt different strategies to deal with patriarchy is underscored by their readiness to die for the course of action they feel is right.

Emile Durkheim and George Simpson's theory of suicide illuminates my analysis here. In this theory, Durkheim defines suicide as an act leading to "death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows will produce this result" (44). It happens when an individual does not care to live any longer. Simpson theorises on the different factors and statuses that determine the rate of suicide. Among the many, he identifies the relationship between suicide and sex on the one hand and marital status on the other hand. He associates women's lower positions in society with the higher number of suicide attempts. In this regard, I argue that Isamba's suicide and Bugonoka and Bulihwali's frequent contemplation of taking their own lives largely concurs with Simpson's association of women's social positions with consummated suicide or attempted suicide. However, Simpson's most convincing argument in the understanding of the cause of suicide and suicide thoughts is the dissatisfaction with women's marital statuses where he links childless marriages with high suicide rates and attempts. Related to Simpson's attributions is what Durkheim calls "altruistic suicide". This occurs when an individual's life is "rigorously governed by custom and habit [...] it results from an individual taking his own life because of higher commandments" (15). According to Durkheim, this type of suicide is more prevalent where "ancient patterns of obedience are rife" (15). I propose here that from the feminist point of view, Durkheimian causes of suicide could be linked with patriarchy. Patriarchy could be highlighted as one of the major causes of suicide among women and that suicide among oppressed women could be theorised as a form of resistance. In their study, Sing Lee and Arthur Kleinman theorise female suicides in pre-communist China as resistance because there is evidence that

[W]omen who killed themselves in order to defy forced marriages, saw such suicides as being the consequence of a number of societal ills [...as] active personal struggle against the evils of society, such as the sexual double standard of chastity, lack of the freedom of love, and other aspects of patriarchalism that disempowered women. (295)

They identify practices such as forced marriage, abusive husbands, polygyny, and abuses by in-laws as likely to lead to female suicides. Although these theorists draw on evidence and theories from China (Lee and Kleinman) and Europe (Durkheim and Simpson), I find their

association of patriarchal oppression and undue societal influence on the individual, in particular the female, with both suicide attempts and consummated suicides more convincing.

In African literature, suicide is a common trope. Yvonne Vera's *Butterfly Burning* (1998) has Phephelaphi, a female character, committing suicide because her dream of studying and practising nursing in colonial southern Rhodesia has been shattered by her unplanned pregnancy. Ama Ata Aidoo's *Anowa* (1970) is about Anowa who marries an impotent husband and is later on blamed as being the cause for her husband's impotence. This forces her to commit suicide. Rosa in Euphrase Kezilahabi's Swahili novel, *Rosa Mistika* (1976), a Swahili novel takes her own life because her suitor leaves her after finding out that she is not a virgin. Nnu Ego's attempt to commit suicide in *The Joys of Motherhood* because of her first child's death is another example. Many of these instances revolve around love, family and procreation, and are largely shaped by patriarchal mandates. Economic reasons also lead to suicide. Mikhail Gromov's analysis of the trope in Tanzanian and Kenyan popular Swahili fiction published after 2000 indicate that female suicide is linked to the economic challenges inherent in the neoliberal period. And Mosha's study of Tanzanian Swahili fiction links gender violence and both consummated and attempted suicide to women's economic deprivation. These suicides can be seen as redemptive because as Lugano has argued in the case of the Swahili Bildungsromane, "they bring an end to the suffering of the protagonists. In death, they are not subject to patriarchal oppression, so death takes a liberative function" (138).

Their insights are important in understanding the portrayal of female characters as suicidal. Reading all these instances alongside the depiction of Isamba's suicide, I stress that infertility-related suicide should not be surprising given the pre-colonial nature of patriarchal connectivity and strict pronatalist norms. Otherwise, as we shall see in chapter five (which focuses on the free market period), the situation is different and some characters dread pregnancies and even attempt to abort their pregnancies. While some characters choose suicide over carrying a pregnancy, mothers in *Rosa Mistika* teach their daughter how not only to avoid getting pregnancies but also how to abort should they get one.

Ogundipe-Leslie hints at suicide as a form of resistance or speech. She writes that "in suicide [...] women speak" (11). In the face of hopelessness, demoralization and helplessness, suicide can be read both as a form of communication and resistance. Like Scott, Lucien Bianco has highlighted the different mechanisms that Chinese peasants use to resist their exploiters. He observes that sometimes a peasant chooses to "commit suicide before his [landlord's] door"

(280) which then “serve[s] to make the landlord lose face” (Lee and Kleinman 301). Thus in the modern world, suicide as resistance or communication with the power holders comes in such forms as suicide bombers, Chinese monks setting themselves on fire, prisoners going on hunger strike, and the general idea of martyrs. Although these examples of suicide cases are *Samsonic*¹⁴ in that they are meant to kill others, they are, in my opinion, forms of communication and resistance strategies adopted by the powerless. Through Isamba’s suicide, Mapalala demonstrates that she is a sacrificial lamb whose death sends a message to the society about the way it handles individuals. To her husband, the message is even louder; she chose to be disowned by her people and joined him as a wife, only to be betrayed and abused by the husband and his community. This message speaks so powerfully to Matumula that he himself dies of a broken heart. The point here is that engaging in dehumanization also damages the dehumanizer. Dehumanization impacts on both sides; the dehumanizer’s as well as the dehumanized. One sees suicide as the last resort used by Isamba in an oppressive situation. Isamba’s suicide is a representation of what Scott has called ‘a weapon of the weak’, but unlike the way Scott uses it to examine group and macro-social resistance, Mapalala uses it as an individual strategy sending signals to the overall community.

However, one may ask if Isamba’s suicide is necessary or is the only strategy for exit. Is there no other way she could have reintegrated herself into society? As I have demonstrated above, to Isamba, it is a solution and a means to resist the problems she is facing – a weapon of the weak. To the author, this death is a narrative strategy to exit the plot while characterizing his own dilemma concerning the situation facing the character. To this end, Hirsch has noted that as one of the ways for the author to resolve the character’s “break between psychological needs and social imperatives, literary convention finds only one possible resolution: the heroine’s death” (27). While Hirsch sees this as contributing to the silencing of the woman by killing her as a character, to Mapalala, it is a form of resistance. The analysis of the love potion as a way of taming patriarchs and suicide as both communication and resistance stresses that female characters bargain from a weak position and as a result they use both subtle and overt means for bargaining or resisting.

Conclusion

Kitereza and Mapalala’s declared intention is to salvage the traditional values of their societies by imaginatively retrieving them through fiction. Their main pre-occupation is the relationship between the individual and the community in relation to the major value of

¹⁴After the Biblical Samson who takes his own life as part of revenge against the Philistines. See Judges 15.

procreation in the respective societies. The universality of the ideal of procreation transcends the communities depicted in the two novels. This is the background against which the two ethnographic novels can be understood as contributing to the understanding of the nation.

In showing the portrayal of how characters strive to fulfil the procreation role, they present how characters that are not able to reproduce or do it suboptimally bargain or even resist the dominant discourse created by the community. Therefore, two discourses run parallel in the depiction: the dominant discourse which has the support of the general community or what Buchi Emecheta's character in *The Bride Price* (1978) refers to as the "group mind" philosophy; and the counter-discourse that represents individual strategies to subvert and dismantle or alter the dominant discourse. The lives of both female and male characters are a series of bargainings with and struggles against their communities. In addition to resisting or negotiating with the larger community, female characters still have to bargain with or resist their husbands in the same way husbands have to negotiate with their wives. The three subject positions portrayed: submissive, rebellious, and syncretic are shaped by the methods the character chooses to define his or her life. They are seen as part of the character's growth or quest for growth. The analysis further shows that submission, concession, or quiescence do not necessarily mean weakness; rather, they can be seen as ways of bargaining or strategically dealing with oppressors or as stages of rebelliousness.

The portrayal of the economics of childbearing in both *Myombekere* and *Kwaheri* is such that large progeny (enhanced through polygyny) is linked to the society's economic production in that having many children means more labour and more labour means more wealth. While men are encouraged to be successful in both production and reproduction, the woman is counted successful and therefore respectable only if she is able to deliver the most valued product to her husband and society – children. Bugonoka's hard-working behaviour in *Myombekere* and Efuru's business success in *Efuru* are considered useless because "A child is more valuable than money" (23), as a woman in *Efuru* reasons. In the same way, husbands become 'men' and therefore respectable if they have children and many wives. Matumula, a wealthy man and a warrior like Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*, is a disgrace because he has just one wife and a single child. This is equated with living like a poor man who cannot afford to pay bridewealth for as many women as he wishes to marry and who cannot manage to provide for the wives and children.

In general, marriage in this period is portrayed to be rigorously controlled by society and is seen by men as their major patriarchal privilege. Before marriage, a young man is

economically dependent on his father but once he is married, he attains freedom and acquires other dependents: children and a wife. He begins exercising control over their labour as well. For the young woman it means that she begins living her 'outsider status' and transfers her dependence from her father who raised her to her husband who rules her. It is this patriarchal control and exercising of rights and ownership on both women and young men which facilitates husbands' and fathers' control of both the production and reproduction of material wealth and human beings in this period.

Chapter Three: The Socio-economics of Colonialism and Gender Relations

Introduction

In chapter two the study examined the representation of pre-colonial labour and gender relations. The chapter indicates that gender relations straddle production and reproduction. Kinship structures played a central role in shaping gender relations. The central argument in this chapter is that colonialism represents one of the first points of destabilization of traditional labour and gender relations. Using Hamza Sokko's *The Gathering Storm* and Adam Shafi's *Kuli*, the chapter focuses on the socio-economics of colonialism. It seeks to understand the representation of how colonial activities affected the socio-economic processes of society, in particular, the representation of the behaviour of characters and the ensuing gender relations.

Set in the colonial period, the novels portray the gendering of colonial labour and its influence on the social and spatial mobility of characters. The characters' spatial mobility enables or disables the social mobility of those who directly participate in the movement and those that do not but are connected to the mobile. In the novels, mobility enables or disables gender equality; it constructs or deconstructs characters' femininity and masculinity; and it blurs or enhances the public-private separation. Characters elicit different reactions towards new colonial labour and gender relations by negotiating and strategizing their life options. They negotiate or strategize either as blacks in a racialised colonial economy or as males/females in a gendered colonial economy. The affluent Indian in *The Gathering Storm* and the religious and upper-class Zanzibari families in *Kuli* act as the aspirational identities. In aspiring to acquire these identities, the characters subsequently alter existing contours of gender relations. Focusing on the gendering of mobility and rural/urban spaces in *The Gathering Storm* as well as the cultural investment in domesticity and the public/private separation in *Kuli*, the chapter explores the extent to which characters attempt to challenge or endorse this gendering and cultural investment. The chapter also analyses how penetrable or impenetrable the gendered urban/rural spaces are and how fragile or firm the divide between the public and private spheres is.

The British colonial economic policies portrayed in *The Gathering Storm* are based on strict control of the mobility of people because of the need for male labourers in the colonial plantations and for domestic work in urban centres. As a result, the rural space is

predominantly reserved for women.¹⁵ Reflecting the actual labour situation in colonial Tanzania, the post-second World War period depicted by Sokko is characterized by labourers' strikes against colonial exploitation. *Kuli* extends this theme of the 'unmanageability' of labourers to the urban areas. Such labour strikes prompt a shift in the colonial urban wage policy¹⁶ by introducing a family wage. This shift is a result of the postwar colonial economic crisis characterized by what Cooper calls "the strike wave of the 1946-49" in British Africa.¹⁷

Sheriff and Ferguson's *Zanzibar under Colonial Rule* provides a sketch of Zanzibari colonial labour structures. They note that prior to 1897, Zanzibar's agricultural and domestic labour was done by slaves. Following the abolition of slavery, slaves were turned into paid labourers. The migrant workers and the ex-slaves provided labour services in the clove plantations where they were paid a bachelor wage – a wage "for the regeneration of the labourer's own physical capacities while at work whereas his family, and even he himself when not at work, have to sustain and reproduce themselves at their own expense" (111). Such a wage, as Hay and Stichter note, had to be supplemented with food and other goods from the peasant household and "it was the unpaid labour of rural women that subsidized the colonial wage" (18).

The labour strikes documented by Cooper and Ferguson and represented by Shafi and Sokko destabilized the colonial labour force. Mahmood Mamdani notes that the colonial authorities sought to stabilize the migrant labour by raising the "bachelor" wages to "family" ones. A family wage was "a wage capable of covering the basic living costs of a worker's nuclear family" and this shift was to "stabilize the labour force in East Africa" (Bryceson 9). In light of this, two major simultaneous processes contribute to the shaping of the lives of the colonized people: the peasantisation of the rural Anyalungu woman as depicted in *The Gathering Storm* and the domestication of the urban Zanzibari woman as explored in *Kuli*.

Unlike the ethnographic impulse that shapes the thinking of the writers reviewed in chapter two, the writing style adopted by the authors who write about the colonial period reveals the impact of colonialism on the indigenous people. Lindfors claims that "the writer was expected to argue a case against colonialism by showing the damage it had done in Africa" (139). Thus *The Gathering Storm* details the life of two families - Kamuyuga's and Lubele's. Kamuyuga

¹⁵ See Susan Geiger, *Tanu Women* (1997)

¹⁶ As the author of *Kuli* notes on the blurb, the novel is itself based on the famous strike of Zanzibar dock workers in 1948.

¹⁷ See also Anthony Clayton's report "The 1948 Zanzibar General Strike."

is worldly and Lubele is parochial. Delineating the differences in the way the two families experience colonialism, the novel recounts the economic and psychological distress of the characters and their attempts to reconcile colonially-inspired socio-economic shifts and the indigenous ones. The novel also relates the introduction of Indians as new socio-economic players in the colony. As Mwaifuge notes, the novel depicts “contradictions of colonial capitalism and its influence on the [Anyalungu] people” (86).

Building on the theme of gendered mobility and the urban-rural dichotomy, the two novels create a story that can be read and analysed as one whole piece. In other words, whereas *The Gathering Storm* examines how the colonial economy strove to make the woman an asset producing food for the working urban population and producing the future labourer, *Kuli* details how the colonial economy made the Zanzibari woman a maintainer of the home and an emotional supporter of the male worker. The subject of *Kuli* is Majaliwa who works as a coolie at the Zanzibar port. Like his name suggests, Majaliwa’s life is indeed a *majaliwa*, a hand-to-mouth livelihood, where ‘tomorrow takes care of itself’. *Majaliwa*, a Swahili word for uncertainty, fits well in the lifestyles of the Majaliwas. The depiction of the overworked, humiliated and sickly Majaliwa as a colonized male having access to both the contradictions and opportunities of the colonial economy is contrasted with the depiction of his wife, Mashavu, as a ‘stay-at-home mother.’ Staying at home is both a means for her to earn respect as a wife in a *pardah*-observing community as well as her gendered participation in the colonial economy reproducing labourers and making the home a comfort zone.

The gendering of the rural-urban spaces captured through the two novels is that the woman is expected to serve the colonial economy differently depending on whether she is in a rural area as in *The Gathering Storm* or in an urban area as in *Kuli*. On the other hand, the man is proletarianized in both novels. In proletarianizing him, in particular through recruiting him as a houseboy in *The Gathering Storm*, or working as a port coolie in *Kuli*, his masculinity is subsequently reimagined.

Karen Tranberg Hansen offers important insights for understanding colonial domesticity in the context of Africa and Tanzania in particular. Bringing together studies of colonial domesticities from African countries including Tanzania, Hansen unpacks the notion of domesticity. By theorising domesticity to mean physical space (home), an activity (house-keeping), a relationship of power (civilization, taming), or an occupational designation (house-servant), she allows me to analyse domesticity as a complex aspect of gender relations that brings together race and class relations in a colonial context. With this definition of

colonial domesticity, I invoke Hansen's argument to analyse the representation of the colonial notions of labour and how men encountered colonial domesticity as is the case with the houseboys in *The Gathering Storm*.

The social mobility of the characters can also lead to the creation of a new social stratum in the existing social dispensation. For example, the category of houseboys is one such stratum. Through the category of houseboys, the Indian diaspora in colonial Tanzania is out to prove their masculinity because back in India they are also colonized. In the face of this threat, the houseboys live a double life: they succumb to feminization in their relations with Indians, but maintain their masculinity in their homes or relations with fellow blacks. I call this situational masculinity. In analysing *Kuli*, the gendering of the private and public spheres and an immobile housewife are both linked to colonial economic policies and pre-colonial Islamic, racial and class heritages. The Islamic ideology of gender relations informs the relationship between husband and wife. Through the portrayal of the couple as loving, the novel challenges the link between domesticity and the reinforcement of patriarchal relations that is often taken for granted.

The starting point then is to analyse the portrayal of colonialism as a contact zone where colonial and Indian cultures meet with the culture of the Anyalungu people in *The Gathering Storm* while in *Kuli*, Arabic, Islamic and colonial values intersect with the culture of the indigenous Zanzibari people. Mary Louise Pratt defines 'contact zones' as "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out" (530). Pratt uses transculturation "to describe processes whereby members of subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted by a dominant or metropolitan culture" (531). Using this approach, I analyse how characters appropriate these elements, because transculturation as Françoise Lionnet has argued, "corresponds more accurately to the notion of 'appropriation' - a concept more promising than acculturation and assimilation, and one that implies active intervention, rather than passive victimization" (104). Sara Mills, however, sees the contact zone "as a problematic arena where the meeting of the two cultures creates conflicts" (34). Such conflicts create what Imre Szeman calls zones of instability. The zones are unstable because they are always in "perpetual motion" and form "new and unexpected limits and possibilities" (3).

Using the idea of transculturation, I show how the Anyalungu men and women in *The Gathering Storm* and the Majaliwas in *Kuli* (to use Pratt's words), "determine, to varying

extents, what gets absorbed into their own [culture] and what it gets used for” (37). In my analysis, I distinguish characters’ selective imitation from blind imitation and what these entail in terms of the power relations between the colonizer and the colonized on the one hand, and the male and female characters on the other. I also pay attention to how characters critique, collaborate with, mediate, or parody the new gender spaces and relations. Secondly, I link Pratt’s delineation of ‘parody’ as one of the possible elements of the contact zone with Bhabha’s idea of mimicry and the possibility of producing a hybrid culture. The problem at hand is how, for example, the Anyalungu seem to adopt European and Indian cultures without being able to grasp its ‘essence’ which then produces a “reformed, recognizable other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (Bhabha 8). This cultural halfness may also be used to explain the contradiction and complexity of gender relations in families and society in general during this period. In this sense, I look at ambivalence as a way of reading both positive and negative impacts of the colonial economy on gender relations or what Imre refers to as the “limits and possibilities” of a contact zone. Since the contact zone is characterized by limits and possibilities, there is need to borrow insights from Kandiyoti’s patriarchal bargain framework. Although the framework focuses on women bargaining, I expand it to include how men and women bargain with colonial structures and how they strategize their relations with regard to racial and gender aspects. This bargaining framework shares some tenets with Nnaemeka’s theory of *negofeminism*. This is so because, like the patriarchal bargain framework, *negofeminism* is based on negotiation. In the colonial situation, we can extend this to include men in the bargaining and strategizing processes, just like women do.

In examining the representation of the collusion between the pre-colonial heritages and colonial inequalities in the production of gender relations, I borrow insights from Ali Mazrui’s *Cultural Engineering in East Africa* and *The Africans: A Triple Heritage*, in which he theorises the cultural heritages of the African continent and the conflicts that result from ‘a triple heritage’ (a fusion of African traditional culture, Islamic and Western cultures). Indeed, this triple heritage influences and shapes Mazrui’s depiction of the Tanzanian people in the colonial period. Two arguments can be used to unlock the texts: first, the writers’ association of the theme of individualism and alienation in East African writings with the influence of colonialism. The second is the writer’s fetishisation of Swahili and Islamic cultures especially in the context of Zanzibar; in particular, “their grasp of the intricacies of Islamic scholarship and mores [...] a sense of commitment to the propagation of the Islamic dogma” (Mazrui

1052). These two arguments offer a gateway to understanding the ambivalence that might characterize gender relations depicted in the selected novels, in particular, *Kuli*.

In analysing the representation of the impact of colonialism on gender relations, I also consider the characters' response to these new relations by showing how the characters appropriate and/or challenge the new contours of gender. I begin by examining the representation of the link between the characters' mobility and gender. This is important because "the issue of mobility provides an excellent opportunity to study the gendered nature of colonial economic policies and of political relations inside African households" (Barnes 587) and "mobility and movement are core to people's identities, life experiences, and opportunities" (Imre 1641). Next, I examine the representation of the creation of the category of houseboys and how these houseboys use impression management strategies to negotiate their threatened masculinities. The last section of the chapter focuses on the colonial gendering of public/private spaces and how characters shape their lives in relation to or against this dichotomy.

Gender, Mobility and Labour in *The Gathering Storm*

In *Mobile Africa*, Mirjam Bruijn et al examine the different manifestations of mobility in Africa. They argue that mobility "is more than the movement of people alone: also non-human and non-material things such as ideas and values can move or adopt specific forms as a result of the movement of people" (9). Using this insight to analyse Sokko's representation of mobility, it emerges that the characters' spatial mobility determines the social mobility of the characters and their dependents. Since male characters exhibit more spatial mobility than their female counterparts, it is the mobility of the former that to a great extent determines their families' social mobility. I examine how colonially-induced spatial and social mobility shape the mental and cultural outlooks of the characters, including their reactions towards new gender roles and relations. Secondly, mobility (both spatial and social) must be understood to be the characters' efforts to cope/negotiate with, and/or strategize their lives in the face of a tricky colonial socio-economic situation. To this end, characters' mobility instigates changes in the social and economic fabrics (including gender relations) of the colonized Anyalungu. The proletarianization of the male Anyalungu enhances his mobility, and it exposes him to new lifestyles through his interaction with the colonizer. In other words, as Ranger observes, the colonial economy also "led to the spread into the territory of men who were neither Europeans nor Africans – the Indian traders and clerks who became increasingly important at this time. These men were a source of new ideas" (174).

Mobility is represented by the symbol of the lorry *Khanji & Sons Transport Company Ltd* at the beginning of *The Gathering Storm*. The crowding of the passengers in the lorry and the rough road which the lorry plies symbolize the precariousness of the life of the colonized Anyalungu. The fact that the passengers are predominantly male is a pointer to the gendered nature of people's movement in this fictional portrait of colonial Tanganyika. However, it is important to read the symbol of the lorry as one of the distortions of the representation of colonial mobilities in that the Anyalungu women are not totally immobilized. The novel is also inclusive of the types of mobilities in which female characters participate – shorter and daily.

In interrogating the importance of mobility, the novel recounts a story of two characters: Lubele and Kamuyuga, a die-hard traditionalist and a liberal and willing-to-change person respectively. The portrayal of Kamuyuga as worldly and Lubele as parochial is useful in comparing and contrasting the changes in their families. Kamuyuga's eight years in Pwani¹⁸ change his outlook. First, he speaks of the economic success of the people at Pwani and secondly, how "people know how to make money there" (11). Thirdly, one's ability to make money is important, which is why he has a very respectful opinion of Zayumba: "That boy, I tell you he is very different. He cannot live without money" (19). And money itself has no value, what has value is what one does with it. Therefore "the people of Mpunguta are very stupid [...] they can't even put up a shop [...] they keep sewing up coins round their waists and go to sleep feeling them all the night long" (28). Kamuyuga, like the people of Pwani, worships money. He has the Indian affluent family as his aspirational identity. This exposure is important to him because he manages to put up a shop and later on he becomes the richest black man in the area.

This portrayal of mobility as the pace-maker in Kamuyuga's outlook makes his family a better place to examine the contribution of mobility and the monetised economy into the refashioning of gender relations. Lisa Lindsay's article "Shunting between Masculinity Ideals" provides insights as to how money may be linked to masculinity. Money may be used to buttress social power and enhance status. Money helps to facilitate the transition between 'small boy' and 'big man' status (141). As a 'big man', Kamuyuga does not only become polygynous, but his wives begin to live like the wives of Indians; cloistered in their homes and indolent. Kamuyuga's affluence only helps to strengthen his control over his wives and reduces the mobility of the wives. Although the senior wife detests Kamuyuga's second

¹⁸ Pwani is Swahili for the coastline. It is also used to refer to Dar es Salaam.

marriage, she finds relief that she can now live like the Bulembe Indian women because her dream is realised. She had coveted “the servants they would employ to till the fields; servants to wash her clothing, fetch water for her, and do all her housework; that she would sit knitting her legs stretched out on a clean mat, just like the Bulembe Indian women did” (24). Kamuyuga and his wife’s ambition are mainly based on the economic advantages and racial privileges enjoyed by the Bulembe Indians.

According to Mohamed Bhacker, the presence of Indians in Tanzania pre-dates colonialism. In the early nineteenth century, some Indian immigrants are known to have settled in Zanzibar, along the coast as merchants. As colonized subjects, these Indians had their own dilemmas. Felicity Hand notes that as brown people in a colonial situation where Africanness was equated with blackness and Europeaness with whiteness, Indians were “forced into a shady, borderland zone” to which “both white and black were the other” but struggled to create their own cultural “credentials by distancing themselves from the African labourer and by not identifying too closely with the white ruling elite as they were themselves colonized peoples” (111). James Brennan’s *Taifa: Making the Nation and Race in Tanzania* offers a useful analysis of race politics in colonial Tanzania where, like in other East African colonies, “European, Asian, and African races formed a ranked hierarchy” (47). The hierarchy, as Stephen Morris observes, was that “Europeans dominate[d] politically”; Indians “formed a kind of commercial middle class” and “Africans constitute[d] a working class and undeveloped peasantry” (194). It is against this background that Indians became agents of the empire thereby becoming objects of admiration to the Anyalungu.

Therefore, the Indian homes and shops are important spaces for the articulation of the Anyalungu’s desires and the playing out of power relations between the Anyalungu and the Indians. The Indian woman has little for Kamuyuga to admire, let alone adopt. The narrator’s brief description of Charan’s wife typifies a woman whose interaction with the Anyalungu is limited. Even in the shop, she is expected to maintain a respectable interaction with the Anyalungu:

Now and again a customer walked into the shop, asked for one thing or another. Mrs. Charan would absently shake her head very lightly and without looking at the questioner [...] the gesture bore more than words could hold. They [the Anyalungu customers] would walk out silently looking down. (51)

Here, her customer care does not suggest that Charan's wife is a money-grabbing woman who seeks to empty the Black man's coffers like her husband. She is not a business-minded person. This is to say, the stereotypes of a mean, opportunistic and thrifty Indian apply to the male Indians, the *dukawallah*,¹⁹ and not to their wives. The second explanation of the behaviour of the Indian woman is linked to her being a marker of racial purity. As Hand observes, the "contact between Asian women and individual Africans was limited [to] brief exchanges during the course of a sale in the case of shopkeepers' wives." The Indian women were "painstakingly cocooned within their community and discouraged – if not openly prohibited from establishing friendships with the blacks" (109). The Indian women, as Dan Ojwang notes, "stand out as the markers of ethnic and racial boundaries" (58), a form of labour which Yuval-Davis and Anthias summarize as the reproduction of "the boundaries of ethnic/national groups" (7). Whereas in this case emphasis is put on racial purity, in *Kwaheri*, a novel that depicts the pre-colonial period examined in chapter two, it is in fact ethnic or rather cultural purity that proscribes inter-tribal marriages as revealed through Isamba and Matumula.

As the protector of racial purity, Mrs. Charan's behaviour demonstrates Hand's notion of the fear of "racial contamination" from blacks. The result, as Alibhai-Brown indicates, was that this "terror of contamination encouraged the transformation of Asian women into porcelain ornaments, symbols of purity and wealth, exactly like middle-class Victorian women" (57). Elsewhere, Tanzanian fiction documents such sexual threats. For example, Moyez Vassanji's *Uhuru Street* (1992) demonstrates this fear through Ali, an African domestic servant in an Indian home. Ali is fired from his job after being caught deriving pleasure from watching the daughter of his employer have a midday shower. In another incident, an Indian daughter, Yasmin is in love with Akoto, a Black man. Her mother is against this relationship because it defies the racial divide that is normatized. In both cases, the Indian daughter, like her mother, is protected from the Black male servant whose sexual potency is feared. The behaviour shown by Mrs. Charan and the perception that she stands as the marker of racial and ethnic purity, portray her as being more racist than the male Indian, the *dukawallah* in particular.

As a colonial town, Bulembe is a space where the desires and tastes of the Anyalungu are manifested. The availability of different social and administrative services and the presence of economic opportunities are projected as pull factors for the characters. There are characters that commute daily to Bulembe in order to sell their farm produce, work, or access colonial,

¹⁹ Swahili word for 'an Indian shopkeeper' in East Africa.

social or administrative services. This category is mostly composed of village women. The second category includes those who work in towns and return to their villages on weekends or periodically. The other category has characters that travel far away to places where they stay for a long period. While most male characters are involved in these movements, there is an indication that even when women partake in these movements, theirs are shorter and more limited.

Seen from another angle, the portrayal of Anyalungu women (in particular, Lubele's wife) as engaged in some movements, challenges the tendency to see the colonized female as immobile. The novel challenges this generalization by portraying the movement of female characters, even though such movements may be limited in comparison to those of their male counterparts. To indicate this, the novel uses the image of a 'bald-headed' wife of Mulenge – she is bald-headed because she carries "heavy loads, bananas!" (33), to the market. Here the characters see baldness not as a biological problem; rather they try to link it with the economic situation of the period. The image of female 'baldness' evokes the effect of colonial exploitation of women on the one hand and their vulnerability on the other. However, since baldness is always portrayed as gendered in that it happens mostly to men, it forces us to analyse it as a device that contributes to understanding colonial hardships. Anu Korhonen problematizes the symbolic significance of baldness and argues that like beards, baldness can also be seen as a symbol and a marker of masculinity, that is, "in all its triviality, is another facet of the ubiquitous anxious masculinity" (377). If by carrying heavy loads Mulenge's wife is an example of making the most of the very limited opportunities available to women in the depicted colonial situation, her baldness typifies a hard working woman who even appropriates the masculine image of baldness.

Mulenge's wife is one of the many women that frequent the marketplace on a daily basis to sell their farm produce. The marketplace becomes a source of boosting women's economic security. The colonial marketplace is a common theme in African fiction. In Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* (1988) set in colonial Nigeria, the novel depicts Adaku, the wife of Nnaife, struggling to supplement her husband's wage with her trading at the local market. When she walks out of Nnaife's polygynous marriage, she is not only able to prosper but she is also able to invest in her daughters' education: "I will spend the money I have in giving my girls good start in life [...] I shall see that they get enrolled in a good school" (168). Lisa Lindsay's essay "Domesticity and Difference" extends the idea of the role of market women and shows how market women in colonial Nigeria provided for their families when

their husbands were not on the payroll during Nigeria's railway strike of 1945. Adaku in *The Joys of Motherhood*, the Nigerian market women mentioned by Lindsay and Mulenge's wife in *The Gathering Storm* are examples of women who use the colonial marketplace to strengthen their economic security.

The marketplace is also important as a social space because it has what Virgil Storr refers to as 'extra-economic' functions. According to Storr, we need to see a marketplace as a complex institution going beyond economic transactions. Sokko captures this extra-economic view of a marketplace in a scene where Anyalungu women sit in clusters at the market looking 'admiringly' at the storeyed buildings of Indians:

The women in black [calico sheets] would sit forming black clusters under the mango trees. They listened, watched and a few hoped. They sat gazing at their surroundings. For most of the time, they kept their eyes fixed upon the shop buildings whose aluminum roofs dazzled them [...] the town had its characteristic Indian music which blared from some source that those sitting under the mango trees could not imagine. Whether the Indians were making parties in their houses, or whether it was just a group of Indian girls singing, they would not know. Asian women with their children would be seen bending over the balconies of the few storeyed buildings, dressed in their beautiful *saris* and chewing, chewing all the time [the Anyalungu women] believing in some kind of superb ancestry of the Asian town-dwellers who fascinated them so. (5)

Their gaze would then be followed by chatting and debating about "the status that Asians mysteriously acquired, for a price they didn't see [contemplating on] when, how and why it all began to develop" (5). Here the Anyalungu women's look resonates with Fanon's theory of the colonizer-colonized relationship where the latter exhibits "a look of lust, a look of envy: it expresses [their] dreams of possession – all manners of possession" (39). This is because the Anyalungu live in a precarious situation, reminiscent of Fanon's native quarters described as "a world without spaciousness: men live on top of each other [...] a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light" compared with the colonizer's [or Indian's] which is comprised "of stone and steel [...] brightly lit [...] streets covered with asphalt, and the garbage cans [...] a town of white people, of foreigners" (39). Economically and socially, the world of the Anyalungu and that of the Indians are far apart.

The extra-economic significance of the marketplace captured here is that the marketplace is a forum where the women chat, debate, admire and even question the status of the Indians. This way, the marketplace becomes a special ‘knot’ in the complex network of colonial, socio-cultural and political life of a woman. According to Mikhail Bakhtin, unlike the official sphere, the marketplace has the “carnavalesque nature” which is characterized by “exceptional privileges of license and lawlessness” because it is here that a human being “comes into contact with other bodies of varying age and social caste” (92). Thus, all performances in the marketplace are “imbued with the same atmosphere of freedom, frankness and familiarity [...] the center of all that is unofficial: [...] enjoying “a certain extraterritoriality in a world of official order and ideology; it always ‘remained with the people’” (154).

Sokko emphasizes the freedom of the Anyalungu women to critically discuss the power which the Indians have and by default admire their lifestyles. The marketplace is therefore, the only place where the Anyalungu women are free from patriarchal family and kinship restrictions. Other than challenging the status of the Indians, it remains to be seen how the Anyalungu women use the said status to challenge patriarchy in their homes. Portrayed ambivalently as a place where vices such as female prostitution thrive, the marketplace offers women relief from rural restrictions and it allows them to engage in sexually non-conformist or deviant behaviour. When Kamuyuga’s wife sleeps around with other men during her husband’s absence, it is the marketplace that enhances her freedom.

By affording his male characters more mobility than his female characters, Sokko indicates that the male person is able to experience more of the contradictions and opportunities of colonialism. This puts the male person in a better position to be an agent of change in the family. Thus, “Kamuyuga had fascinated her [his wife] with his ambitions, which after a time became hers too” (25). Such a portrayal reduces the wife to a passive receptacle of her husband’s ambitions. Here, the unequal husband-wife power game is replayed and endorses not only the power that the husband traditionally has over his wife, but also the power that comes with being worldly. By just being a travelled person, Kamuyuga has his status elevated by the villagers to the point of being nicknamed *Hamniwezi* – the invincible. Like Fanon’s description of the worldly Martinicians in *Black Skin White Masks*, Kamuyuga is portrayed as a pompous person; just like the Martinicians who returned to Martinique from France. The most influential power is one that comes with living an affluent life, just like the Bulembe Indians. The transformation of the Kamuyuga couple is a process linked to their access to the lives of Indians that leads to apparent shame about their own ways of life. This shame makes

the couple admire the Indians. By rendering themselves psychologically inferior, the couple feels that they will be rewarded if they choose to adopt the lifestyle of those they admire. Consequently, they normalize the perceptions that the Indians' way of life is the best standard that must be emulated if they are to amass power and respect.

The damning representation of the trader as a mean and crafty *dukawallah* and his wife as lazy and dirty in much of East African literature raises questions regarding what the Anyalungu men and women specifically admire about Indians. For example, we encounter Ramlagoon Gharamashah in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* (1977); Murmohamed Pipa in Moyez Vassanji's *The Gunny Sack* (1989) and *The Book of Secrets* (1994); Charan and Jayandra in *The Gathering Storm*, and Raza in Shafi Adam Shafi's *Vuta n'kuvute* (1999). In all these novels, as Justus Makokha notes, the Indian trader is represented as a mean, crafty and cunning *dukawallah*; "always waiting to con the native black African [...]; emptying the Black man's wallet and coffers" (30). Hand notes that, in addition to being stereotyped as money-grabbing, inward looking, thrifty, opportunistic and stingy *dukawallahs*, Indians were generally perceived to be willing accomplices of the British Empire. Agehananda Bharati also adds that Indians are portrayed in East African fiction as sneaky, mistrustful, arrogant, dirty, clannish, and monopolisers of local trade. Such stereotypes may be used to question why the Anyalungu admire Indians. Kamuyuga has mastered many of these and fits in the stereotypes of the male Indians. Kamuyuga's appropriation of these qualities, portrayed as masculine, suggests that as a male Anyalungu, he compares himself and his life, not simply with Indians, but specifically with male Indians. On the other hand, his wife has interest in adopting the femininity of the Indian wives. This way, the impact of the couple's imitation is contradictory: it is economically empowering to the couple, but also socially constraining to the wife, to the extent that even the little mobilities that she used to enjoy before disappear completely. This is an example of self-seclusion, which is informed by racial and religious socialization. Whereas in the perception of the couple, this seclusion is empowering, from the feminist point of view, it may be seen as disempowering. Although feminists are quick to criticize the practice of seclusion in its entirety, certain questions remain hanging: when is self-seclusion positive? And when is it negative?

Through Kamuyuga's turn to a polygynous lifestyle, the novel speaks to the male characters' fascination with polygyny in this period as having roots in the traditional society, as pointed out in chapter two. Wealth, status and polygyny are interlinked. In this respect, Kamuyuga is a

selective imitator. Although he imitates the Indian to prosper economically, he does not seek to maintain a single wife as Charan and Jayandra do.

In prefacing *The Wretched of the Earth*, Jean Paul Sartre notes that colonial mimicry disempowers the colonized. Sokko challenges this view by depicting the empowering quality of mimicry, first, through Kamuyuga who appropriates the Indians' trading skills to his advantage. The second example is through Baba Athuman, a domestic servant in the home of the District Commissioner (DC), who imitates his employer's lifestyle, in particular the way he interacts with his wife and other family members. Table manners, dressing, speaking and smoking a pipe like the DC are highlighted as some of his new behaviours. His family's table manners, for example, are contrasted with those of the Anyalungu, in particular, Lubele's family, where men, women and children eat separately, a trend that is common in both *Myombekere* and *Kwaheri* which I discussed in the previous chapter. This shift addresses the inequalities that existed in the traditional society where, in addition to men and women eating separately, even what they ate differed significantly.

Feminist Liisa-Marja Swantz is critical of this pattern of eating. She claims that in the context of traditional Tanzanian society, not only do men and women eat separately, but "food was divided into men's and women's foods, different foods being considered suitable for each sex. It was taken for granted, and many still considered it an indelible Chagga custom that husbands must be served a lot of meat by their wives" (103). This contributed to inadequate protein intake among small children and accounts for high malnutrition among Chagga children. The problem with Baba Athumani's mimicry is that he is not aware of the empowering nature of the table manners he has adopted. On the other hand, Kamuyuga uses his imitation of the Indians' trading prowess to embrace a patriarchal polygynous marriage.

The Anyalungu's encounter with the colonial economy shows a direct relationship between characters' spatial mobility and their social mobility. Characters' spatial mobility is used to achieve their social mobility. Social mobility is portrayed as an incentive for characters' spatial mobility.

If the mobility of the colonized is towards the urban centres in search of economic opportunities, one is forced to ask just what kind of opportunities these are. In the following section, I demonstrate that due to economic hardships, men are portrayed as venturing into occupations traditionally considered feminine. This shift has implications for the gendered divisions of labour, gender relations and the men's masculinity in societies.

Colonialism and Male Domesticity: The Houseboy in *The Gathering Storm*

There are different theories about the origin of houseboys as a category of employment in the context of Tanzania. One of the theories links male domestic work to slavery and slave trade in East Africa. According to Carol Eastman, slaves and war captives were used as domestic servants during the eighteenth century along the East African coast. Through pawnships, for example, rich people could get slaves and turn them into servants. This practice of debt bondage and its link to slavery in Africa is explored in depth by Paul Lovejoy and Toyin Falola, and it is captured by Abdulrazak Gurnah in his novel *Paradise* (1994), where Yusuf, a twelve-year-old boy, is given by his parents to Aziz in part repayment of his parents' debt. As Ferguson notes in the context of Zanzibar, the adoption of youths or orphans as a way of securing domestic servants was based on the ideology of Islam which encourages adoption of the poor. Eastman contends that following the abolition of slave trade in the nineteenth century, slavery was transformed into household service where servants were paid for work that was originally performed by slaves, but "with a concomitant blurring of the lines between free and non-free" (103). Thus the transformation of the *utumwa* (slavery) into *utumishi* (service) or *mtumwa* (slave) into *mtumishi* (servant), only helps to reify the idea of slavery but "its attributes find space in the domestics" (103). He concludes thus about Kenya's situation:

A gender distinction arose whereby men would become servants (*watumishi*) but not *watumwa* ('slaves'), women would be integrated within a family situation (either as wives or concubines) and the idea of slavery (*utumwa*) as having ever been an aspect of Swahili society would disappear. (93)

Here Eastman indicates that efforts to replace the woman's domestic labour began with the abolition of slave trade.

The second theory, as emphasized by Hansen, links domestic labour, especially male domestic labour, to colonialism.²⁰ Although Hansen theorises both male and female domestic labour as a product of the colonial contact, she sees men's entry into domestic work as "one of the earliest forms of labor through which African men were incorporated into wage labor" (17). Focusing on male domestic work in the context of Tanzania, Bujra notes that domestic

²⁰ See, for example, Ferdinand Oyono's depiction of Toundi and Baklu, the laundry man in *Houseboy* (1966). Another example of colonial houseboys and their inferiorisation is found in Ama Ata Aidoo's *No Sweetness Here* (1970), a collection of short stories. In a story "For Whom Things did not Change" she depicts Zirigu, a servant who is a 'man' at home and a black at work.

work in colonial Tanzania was predominantly a male occupation which began with the use of male prisoners as domestic workers. The reason for this, as Bujra notes, was that male servants proved to be more convenient than female servants because the former could work both inside the house as cooks or laundry-men and outside the house as gardeners or watchmen. Both theories indicate that the category of houseboys was foreign to Africans.

According to Hansen, by moving into the domestic sphere (which according to Ray and Lowrie is considered a female space), the depiction “challenges the assumption that the domestic sphere is gender-bound to women” (Hansen 17). However, it is the stigma attached to domestic labour that problematizes the portrayal. Available literature indicates that stigma is common, regardless of whether the worker is female or male. In the context of South Africa, Jacklyn Cock and Shireen Ally separately note that domestic labour is a low status and least prestigious of all occupations and that it is a black person’s occupation. What then is it that is so stigmatizing to Lunja, for example, that Kamuyuga denigrates him as the ‘*maandazi* maker’, a cook, who is not eligible to marry Moina? Here Kamuyuga suggests that it is self-disgracing of a man to work as a *maandazi* maker. Kamuyuga is perhaps comparing Lunja’s work with traditional and respectable jobs such as farming or fishing in *Myombekere* or hunting in *Kwaheri*, as discussed in the previous chapter. The point here is that there are differences in the way this stigma is experienced by men and women. Anna Weinrich (as cited in Cock) notes that

It is the considered opinion of African society that domestic service is no proper occupation for a man. It is seen as degrading him in his manhood and of providing him with promotion possibilities and chances of bettering himself [while for women] domestic work is not degrading as it is for African men because cooking has always been the normal work expected to [sic] African women. (102)

Weinrich calls for a comparison between the stigma meted out to male and female domestic workers. The limitation of this approach is that in the novel there is no female character working as a domestic servant. In the absence of such comparison, I raise another question: if we are to distinguish between domestic work performed by men in the homes of their employers from that which they perform in their own homes, which of the two carries more stigma? Bujra is insightful here. She notes the same contradictions in gender and work, where men see housework as unmanly for them in their own homes, but accept it elsewhere as a source of income. This means that the attachment to work and respect that the houseboys

show in Sokko's novel may be construed as artificial, since their concern is money. The stigma that is directed to the houseboys occurs largely because they choose to do chores which they would not have done in their homes where the masculine-feminine divide is upheld.

Another source for societal stigma for the Anyalungu male servants is the relationship between these houseboys and their employers, especially when the relationship is reduced to that of the colonizer and the colonized. In his theory of masculinity, Robert Morrell notes that racism and colonialism are forms of masculinity and men of different ethnic groups experience these masculinities differently. Both Hansen and Lowrie show that the term 'houseboy' was used to refer to non-white male domestic servants in British colonies in Southeast Asia, the Pacific, Australia and Africa. This notion, as Lowrie notes, emphasized the otherness of the male, including his "servility, irrationality, inappropriate sexuality and danger" (105). In other words, as Martinez and Lowrie observe, these 'houseboys' were infantilized and denied both adulthood and the privilege of exercising masculinity because of "paternalistic emphasis on supervision, discipline and training and a corresponding denial of manhood or adulthood" (319).

The effect of this superior masculinity on the houseboy, as Boehmer points out, is that the houseboy is seen as "less human, less civilized, as child or savage, wild man, animal, or headless mass" (*Colonial* 76). This link between 'houseboys' and colonial masculinities is important in understanding Sokko's depiction of the colonial home (the DC's home) and the Indian homes as microcosms of colonial relations. This affords us a way of looking at gender relations between the colonial/Indian *memsahibs* and the male servants and it also offers insights into the ways in which colonial labour dynamics initiated shifts in masculinities.

The relationship between the Indians and their houseboys in the novel resonates with the insights offered by the above scholars. For Charan, his Anyalungu houseboy is an uncivilized being who lives "over there, beyond the horizon, somewhere in the bush." It is a place he "can't locate exactly" (110). Owing to the fact that he lives in the bush, primitiveness, foolishness, quietness, dullness and illiteracy define him. They are "creatures [...] not used to good things all their lives" (111). And Jayandra refers to his servant Alli, as a "punk" – a worthless person. This relationship of the houseboy to the Indian accounts for the stigma the villagers attach to their work as houseboys.

The portrayal of Charan and Jayandra's wives as charged with the burden of civilizing and feminizing the houseboys is another factor of the stigma. In the definition of domesticity provided above by Hansen, civilizing is construed as a form of power relations. Civilizing the houseboys means teaching them the necessary performance skills in order to enable them to carry out duties that are essentially new to them – duties meant to be performed by the opposite gender and serving their masters. These skills include servility. This feminization-civilization dualism indicates that owning and controlling servants, as Cissie Fairchilds argues, serves as “a public proclamation of one's social rank” and “a symbol of status and civilization” (6). The ownership and control of the male servant by a female Indian intersects with colonial racial privileges as captured in the myth that the Indian wife tells Zayumba after the latter fails to count coins: “You don't know how to count coins, but it is not your fault, poor you” because

Long in the past, God created three people [...] the three people were a European, an Indian and an African. Then God asked each of them in turn. He said, “What do you want to have on Earth?” Then the European said “I want wisdom and power”; God gave him. Next came the turn of the Indian. He said to God, ‘I want shops and coins’; and God gave him. When the turn of the African came, he asked God saying, “I want drums and women.” (139-140)

This creation myth displays racial hierarchies in colonial Tanganyika. It serves to justify the relations between the Indian *memsahibs* and the houseboys. Zayumba's helplessness before his ‘employer’ is such that he cannot even afford to defend himself to the extent that “the fat Indian woman kept shouting at me that whole morning [but] I said nothing” (140). Such a posture from Zayumba highlights the servitude and the dilemmas that male domestic workers face in their relations with their *memsahibs*. However, his posture might also be seen as a strategy of adaptation or what Cock refers to as the adoption of a “mask of deference; a crucial mode of adaptation [...] that enables the servant to maintain his personality and integrity intact” (103). This image of the houseboy as deferential and servile suggests the unequal power relations between the houseboy and the employer. The image also illustrates the houseboy's adaptation mechanism. The fact that these houseboys are emasculated by Indian *memsahibs* adds a lot to their psychological disfigurement. The houseboys, who are portrayed as helpless beings before Indian women, are derided by their inability to use their masculine advantages over the Indian *memsahibs*. In this case, it is not gender but race and

the employer-employee relations that determine the way the houseboy relates with his *memsahib*. In this relationship, the Indian *memsahib* represents a privileged femininity while the houseboy represents an inferior masculinity.

The houseboys' display of double standard behaviour towards the Anyalungu gender relations also accounts for further societal stigma meted out to them. The same men who do all kinds of domestic chores in their employers' homes refuse to do these same chores in their homes. They maintain the master-servant divide in their relationship with their wives while at the same time ignoring it in their relationship with their Indian employers. They are the masters, ordering their wives and everybody in their homes. However, when it comes to their relationship with their employers and families, they are expected to be ordered by everybody including the wives and children of their employers, thus living their tag as 'boys' and denied both adulthood and masculinity. Calling adult men *boi* [boy] in the novel, like calling adult women and house servants 'girls' in the American context, Collins notes, are examples of "deferential rituals" meant to downgrade them as less capable human beings. Cock refers to this as the "ideological maintenance" (8) role of the institution of domestic work where even children (Indian children in this case) learn how they should relate with their African servants, because they are, after all, 'boys.'

Another perspective to understanding the stigma meted out to the houseboys could be reading the houseboys' relationship with their employers as a form of hypocrisy since the houseboys are not prepared to replicate the same relationship in their homes. This is a strategic adaptation around a tricky gender threat to their hegemonic masculinity. They display their true statuses in their families to indicate that it is something done for money and for people who are different from them. This is a strategic adaptation to their questionable image as men because they operate on the assumption that they would gain respectability in the village if they are obeyed and respected in their homes. This hypocrisy resonates with Matumula's bullying behaviour which was discussed in chapter two. Both the houseboys and Matumula perform masculinity in order to create a favourable picture to society.

This point is best explained at the end of the novel where Zayumba, who has been working for the Indians, is reluctant to go and work in the house of Kamuyuga as a houseboy because he knows that Kamuyuga subscribes to the gender values of the Anyalungu. But upon "thinking hard about this, [Zayumba] decided to come and work for me as you see him here" (154), Kamuyuga testifies. The fact that it takes Kamuyuga a lot of energy to convince Zayumba to work for him is significant here. Zayumba's reluctance is a case of socialization

that houseboys are meant for the Indians or whites and not blacks. Thus the way he relates to his new black and Anyalungu employer is different from the way he relates to his former Indian bosses. Therefore, “when we ask him to do one kind of work or other he refuses. Yesterday I asked him to go and fetch water, he gave the pretence that he was not well. I know that he was not willing” (172), Kamuyuga’s wife complains. In this case Kamuyuga is still disadvantaged due to his race, despite the fact that he employs Zayumba. In re-evaluating his life, Zayumba reflects about “the many years he had served women of different races.” This reflection “opened up before him, bit by bit. He was extremely depressed [...]; then he came to his conclusions.” Zayumba does to the wife of his new employer what he cannot do to the wife of his former employer, the Indian *dukawallah*:

His eyes reddened. Before Moina could add another word, the huge left palm of the veteran houseboy and *maandazi*²¹-maker had gripped her hair [...] and by his right hand he sent a full-strength blow onto her back. Moina dropped flat onto the ground. He raised her and gave her a second blow [...] and raising her a third time he pushed her backwards. She knocked against the chair and mirror and fell. He lifted her again and another blow sent her to the wall. (173)

As a houseboy, Zayumba has to adjust his relationship depending on the race of his employers. Rather than adopt a ‘mask of deference’ as he did with the Indian wife, he chooses to display his dissatisfaction by fighting the wife of his black employer. This is the result of his awareness that he is dealing with a fellow black.

Comparing Zayumba’s relationship with the Indian woman and his relationship with Kamuyuga’s wives, it becomes clear that race rather than money shapes relations between the houseboys and the Indians. An Indian, irrespective of age, gender or social standing, is depicted as an impregnable force to the Anyalungu man. The colonial contact has introduced new masters over the Anyalungu – the whites and the Indians. Therefore, the Anyalungu experience two types of colonialism: the formal British colonialism (which is experienced by all the Anyalungu), and the one enforced on them at work by their Indian employers. However, when the group of women at the market wonder how and when ‘the Indians mysteriously’ acquired the status they have, they indicate that back home in India they are

²¹ Swahili for doughnut-like fried buns.

colonized subjects as well. This is a pointer to the complexity of colonial power relations captured through the figure of the diasporic Indian in Africa as a member of a superior race.

The houseboys' relationship with the Indians is a replication of the colonizer-colonized relationship, except that the terms 'colonizer' or 'colonized' are not used. What are the possibilities for the houseboys to retaliate or resist denigration by the Indian bosses? As live-in servants, these houseboys have access to the inner side of the life of the Indians and their families. We learn, for example, that Alli witnesses a scuffle between his Indian employer Charan and Jayandra, during which the latter even threatens to kill the former. This access to family conflicts is only one among the many possibilities, just like it is with their exposure to their employers' 'dirty underpants.' The limitation in this novel is that such possibilities are not exploited. In the absence of all these possibilities, these houseboys have to look for soft targets where they can relieve their miseries. This is in their own homes.

Therefore, when Cordelia, a female character in *The Joys of Motherhood*, links the emasculation of their husbands by the colonial employers with their display of macho behaviour in their families, she provides a way of looking at these displays as a kind of negotiation where the male domestic servants try to fit themselves in the 'box' of traditional expectations. Talking about their husbands, Cordelia claims: "They are all slaves, including us. If their masters treat them badly, they take it out on us" (51). This misdirection of anger as a result of bad treatment is also captured in the context of black-white relationships in the American context in Toni Morrison's novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970). In comparison to Nnaife and the Anyalungu houseboys, blacks in Morrison's novel misdirect their anger towards their families leaving the Whiteman who is their oppressor unscathed. How to interpret this misdirection of anger is a question here.

Erving Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* uses the metaphor of a stage to explain human social interaction where all human beings are seen as actors and their lives as performance. He envisions life as a drama with a front stage and a backstage characterized by feigning or pretending. Applied in understanding the behaviours of the houseboys in the novels, Goffman's theory suggests that since the colonial situation forces the houseboys to assume both masculine and feminine positions, their main struggle is to present their selves in a favourable light to both their employers and families. This also entails how people will perceive them. This is a major dilemma for the houseboys.

Through the portrayal of houseboys, we see that race plays an important role in defining relations between the houseboy and the Indian. The houseboy is therefore a ‘man’ at his home and a ‘woman’ at work. As a man in his home, he does not cook. But as a black man in the Indian home, he is a *maandazi* maker. In the eyes of his society, he is feminized.

The Colonial Public and the Private in *Kuli*

Hansen brings together accounts of how British authorities and missionaries sought to impose in Africa the Victorian notions of domesticity as part of “consolidating colonial rule” (5). In this volume, LaRay Denzer, Nakanyike Musisi, Sita Ranchgod-Nilsson, and Nancy Hunt explore colonial education in Nigeria, missionary education in Uganda, colonial *memsahibs*’ clubs in Southern Rhodesia and foyers *sociaux* (social homes) in Burundi, respectively. In all these cases, women were trained for the home. Regulating African families and making the woman a ‘homemaker’ was therefore, central to colonial economic policies. The aim was to maintain the public-private dichotomy in a way that makes women contribute to the economy as full-time housewives. It was the colonial governments’ view that stable families were important for the prosperity of the colonial economy.

According to McClintock, imperialism came into being through domesticity, where “gender is the abiding but not the only dimension” (34). McClintock proposes to see domesticity as a “space” and a “social relation to power.” In other words, colonial control and civilization missions were designed to reproduce nature – “the natural division of domestic labor.” McClintock concludes that “imperialism suffused the Victorian cult of domesticity and the historical separation of the private and the public, which took place around colonialism” (36). This is one of the perspectives of understanding the depiction of the public and private spheres in *Kuli*.

Another perspective is to link the distinction between the public and domestic spheres with the pre-colonial religious and class heritages. As mentioned earlier, *Kuli* is written against a background of the society that is predominantly Muslim, which is a product of its pre-colonial contact with Arab traders from the East. Due to the history of slavery and slave trade, the people of Zanzibar attach different statuses to one’s descent. High status is therefore defined in reference to descent such as being free born, which is contrasted with low status linked to slave ancestry. Lugano notes that “to fully belong to the high-status group, one had to be light-skinned as well as Moslem, since non-Moslems were viewed as infidels and less civilized” (42). I examine how Shafi represents the way race, class, gender and religion are

played out in the colonial context. I specifically consider how their intersection with the colonial economic policies shape existing gender relations. This is a feminist intersectionality approach, whose case has been argued by scholars such as Kimberle, Yuval-Davis, McCall, and Cole. For these scholars, gender is not an autonomous category; it is understood better when studied in a particular cultural context and in relation with other identity categories. An intersectionality approach “reject[s] the separability of analytical and identity categories” (McCall 1771). In other words, since the categories interact in a complex way, they must, where possible, be investigated together. Gender, race, class, and religion in the world created in *Kuli* variously intersect to produce ‘distinct’ social identities such as a ‘poor, arabized, black’ couple, the Majaliwas. In *The Gathering Storm* (analysed in the previous section) we have the ‘rich, black, and ‘indianized’ Kamuyuga. Such intersections and distinct, complex identities account for the complex nature of gender relations in *Kuli* as well. The analysis, as Cole notes, begins by “attending to the diversity within social categories [...] interrogating how the categories depend on one another for meaning” and even analysing them as representing “hierarchies of privilege and power that structure social and material life” (Cole 171).

Shafi’s choice of names for his central characters tells a story of the Zanzibari gendering of the public and private lives in the colonial period. Kyallo Wamitila’s “What’s in a Name: Towards Literary Onomastics in Kiswahili Literature,” argues for the importance of analysing characters “by taking recourse to their names [because it] helps the reader in deciphering of the text in which the names are” (35). A character’s name is not only an individual tag but it also distinguishes “one fictional character from another” adding on to the text’s “semantic, pragmatic, allusive, and symbolic import” (36). Majaliwa symbolizes the exploitative and uncertain livelihood that is a product of colonialism. He is a symbol of colonial capitalist exploitation which works to turn a man into a beast of burden while reducing him to a life of *majaliwa*. Shafi’s onomastics show a sharp contrast through Mashavu, the name of the wife of Majaliwa. *Mashavu*, a Swahili word for ‘chubby cheeks,’ is a symbol of affluence in Tanzania. The irony is that the fictional Majaliwa is a *majaliwa* in the real sense of the word, yet he provides for the wife who is chubby-cheeked. The idea is that someone with chubby cheeks can afford to eat and drink as much as they wish.

The figure of the overworked Majaliwa is one story chronicling the portrayal of the male in the colonial economy. The depiction of Mashavu as subjected to what Collins calls the “cult of womanhood” defined by the four virtues of “piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity”

(71) is another story. Collins sees the cult of womanhood as one of the “controlling images” that tether a woman to the domestic sphere. This representation of Mashavu can be understood by looking at it from the cultural context of the novel and how characters respond to or comment about it. Analysing this calls for taking into account the multiple legacies of Zanzibar – Islamic, Arabic, and colonial. It also calls for depiction as a technique to critique or support the status quo.

According to Randall Pouwels, the interplay between Islamic and Arabic cultures provided the standards of civilization or *ustaarabu* in Zanzibar and along the East African coast of the Indian Ocean. Thus, “*ustaarabu* [‘arabness’ encompassing its association with Islam] supplanted *uungwana* as the standard of civilization. To be civilized meant having to live ‘like an Arab’ – and usually having to be Arab-like meant to “give the appearance of wealth even where wealth did not exist” (182). The Islamic adjudications included the culture of seclusion and confinement of women to the home.²² Writing about the relations between Swahili men and women, Marc Swartz discusses the practice of secluding women:

The Swahili practise a rather strict form of purdah (*kutawa* in Swahili) and that the separation of life into men’s spheres and women’s spheres is both sharp and carefully enforced. Men are concerned mainly with the outside world, where they are expected to earn the family’s income. Women’s sphere is the home, and their main activities are running the household, [and] caring for the children. (27)

The practice of confining the Zanzibari woman to the home is inherited from a long history of the interaction of the people of Zanzibar with the Arabic and Islamic traditions which came before its formal colonization. Both Arabic and Islamic influences intensified a sense of classes in Zanzibar. The classes of *Waungwana* (civilized) and *Washenzi* (heathens) also intensified a sense of social and ethnic hierarchies. The longer a woman was confined to the home (an indication of wealth), the more she was considered Arabized, pious and therefore, civilized. In a treatise on Swahili cultural realities on gender, performance and identity, Mwenda Ntaragwi comments on this stratification:

Swahili community is stratified along the lines of high and low status [...].
A woman from the high status Swahili family will be more restricted in the

²² Seclusion remains a common trope in Swahili literature especially by the Zanzibar writers. See Said Mohamed’s *Utengano* [Separation] (1980) and Shafi’s other novels such as *Kasri ya Mwinyi Fuad* [The Castle of Mwinyi Fuad] (1978) and *Vuta n’ kuvute* [Tug of War] (1999).

house than a woman from a low status family because the public space is regarded as a male space and for a woman to occupy such a space is to lower her social status. (121)

Ntaragwi raises important issues that bear on the life of Mashavu. He suggests that Islamic and Arabic notions of femininity and piousness overlapped with those of the British Victorian sensibilities. This way, such delineation of status is a containment strategy to put men and women where they are supposed to belong. The question one may ask is why a poor couple like the Majaliwas would find pleasure in living like upper class couples. This situation is certainly being compounded by Islam, which is the religion of most Swahili people.²³ The intersection of ethnicity, status, class, race and gender makes the analysis of gender relations in *Kuli* a complex undertaking even without considering and or particularly considering the multiple legacies of mercantile cultures.

In the theory of social mobility highlighted above, Sorokin argues that in any stratified society, there are 'sieves' which sift and regulate the social mobilities of individuals. In these 'sieves' there are 'holes' which allow some individuals to pass through. One of these 'holes' is religion. All religions "having recruited their followers from all social strata and especially from the lower ones, gave people of such origin the possibility of climbing to high social strata generally through their ladder" (169). While elevating some people, religions, especially in a colonial context, also degraded others. This theme is buttressed by Chinua Achebe's portrayal of Christianity in *Things Fall Apart*. The highlight of this portrayal is that the new religion has elevated characters like Nwoye, who would be marginalised in the traditional society because of his youth.

The representation of the Majaliwas as a poor black couple whose income affords them a hand-to-mouth existence that relegates them to the lower strata of society, is contrasted with their desire to live like a high-status Muslim family where a wife is confined to the home and provided for by the husband. According to Lugano, this desire of the Majaliwas is "rooted in the belief that only low-status women would expose themselves in the public sphere because they must work to survive" (55). The interest of the Majaliwas to give the impression of affluence even though they are poor portrays the couple as 'consumers' of the lifestyle of a

²³ See John Middleton, *The World of the Swahili: An African Mercantile Civilization* (1992). He locates the role of Arabs, Portuguese, British and the centrality of Islamic ideology in understanding different institutions of the Swahili including marriage and family.

high status in order to gratify their psychological cravings, first, and secondly to impress others and attain the esteem and standing that the high status people possess.

This can be explained better through Thorsten Veblen's theory of leisure and class. In this theory Veblen introduces the concept of "conspicuous consumption," in reference to a person's conduct, usually employed to denote the lavish spending of money in order to display higher social status. This display may take two forms: the first is when a rich person displays it and the second is when poor persons like the Majaliwas display it. In both cases, the aim is to impress others and show that they belong to a high class. In the case of the Majaliwas, struggling to live like an upper class and arabized couple with the wife staying indoors, is a result of their emulative cravings – the intention to live a similar lifestyle to the wealthy. It is the satisfaction that results from the display of social status that matters most to them.

Although Veblen's theory initially focused on the economics of spending, it has been applied in sociology to explain how low status people adopt and consume the ideologies and lifestyles of the affluent in order to raise theirs. The point is in a racially hierarchised and religiously classified society as the one depicted in colonial Zanzibar, the colonized is made to display 'visible consumption' of the cultures and lifestyles of the colonizer or dominant race and religion in order to share the esteem of the dominant. What is particularly insightful here is that we can use the same model of 'visible consumption' of the Islamic ideology of *purdah* and rigid separation between the public and the private as explaining Shafi's representation of the Majaliwas. The idea of visible consumption is similar to Matumula's display of macho behaviour in order to impress his community in *Kwaheri*. His aim is like that of the Matumulas, to be counted as organizing their lives in accordance with the hegemonic group.

However, just like the way Matumula in *Kwaheri* is not a natural bully, it is also important to note that even the Majaliwas as a low status people cannot afford to perform *purdah* as it is performed by the upper class people. Like Matumula, the Majaliwas are only masking their true status. Therefore I use *purdah* to refer to the couple's love of the idea of the wife as a stay-at-home woman and the husband as the maintainer of the family, who earns income from outside the home. Put in another form, theirs is *purdah* as lived by a low status couple. Therefore, on the basis of the theory of conspicuous consumption, the stay-at-home Mashavu is not a stereotype; she represents a case of psychological attraction to status symbols. In other words, through *purdah*, she seeks the respect that money or wealth can bring to a woman in a monetised and classed colonial Zanzibar.

How we interpret Mashavu's dependence on her husband is an important question here. Does Majaliwa use his position as the bread-winner to oppress his wife? By showing that they love and respect each other, Shafi contrasts their marital relationship with Said Ahmed Mohammed's treatment of women in his novel *Utengano* (1980), which is also set in Zanzibar. The highlight of the story in *Utengano* is Maimuna, the novel's female character who is brought up in accordance with the practice of *purdah*. Both Maimuna and her mother, Tamima, live in seclusion from the public. Unlike Mashavu in Majaliwa's home, the two women live in the midst of affluence but experience total terror from Maksiudi, the husband, father and master of the castle. Maksiudi is a despot who beats his wife and children with impunity.

Majaliwa and Maksiudi's homes are two worlds apart in both the style of living and gender relations. Maksiudi's home is indeed a castle; a luxurious mansion with literally everything for these women. However, the luxuries are not substitutes for the husband's love that Mashavu gets from Majaliwa in a poor and ramshackle home. Maksiudi's wives are vocal and wish to express agency in their relations with their despotic husband even though they live in a castle, typical of Victorian architecture. Whereas the women in Maksiudi's home are confined to the home by both society and the tyrannical husband, Mashavu is not cloistered by her husband; she is a victim of the larger culture that confines her to the home. When both Tamima and her daughter Maimuna rebel against both seclusion and ill-treatment from the despot in their home, they suggest that an opulent life is not all that a woman needs; a woman needs freedom, dignity, and love among other things from her husband. It is, therefore, about balancing between affluence and upholding human dignity between husband and wife that sustains marriage.

The second approach to examining Mashavu's confinement to the home is to link it with colonial economic policies. The point of departure is what Maria Meis calls "housewifisation" of a woman; "a process by which women are socially defined as housewives, dependent for their sustenance on the income of a husband, irrespective of whether they are de facto housewives or not" (180). This is linked to the rise and development of capitalism which 'externalized' and 'extra-territorialized' women. Meis argues that this capitalist patriarchy produced housewives as a functional category in the international division of labour. Accordingly, she sees the process of housewifization as a crucial requirement for the smooth functioning of imperialism. Elizabeth Elbourne extends Meis' theory of housewifization by arguing that domesticity was a deliberate policy by the British

colonialists to dispossess African women and make them not only dependent on African men but also as a category useful for the colonization process.

According to Durba Gosh, colonialism marginalized women and fixed them to the domestic sphere, “restructuring family labour patterns so that women were encouraged to stay indoors and tend to their homes and children” (748). Following Meis’ theory of housewifization and colonial capitalism, the confinement of Mashavu to the home may also be linked with urbanization, a situation that provides favourable conditions for the equation of public/private spheres with men and women respectively. Indeed, by staying at her home, Mashavu participates in the colonial capitalist economy as part of her consumption, reproduction and maintenance of labour. In other words, she is part of the colonial proletariat group.

Although scholars such as Deborah Gaitskell, Margaret Hay and Sharon Stichter have raised issues about the depiction of the woman as a stay-at-home mother because it makes her a helpless dependant and that men may use this dependence to oppress her, Shafi challenges this perception by portraying the Majaliwas as a couple whose love and commitment are exemplary. Shafi does not condone the stay-at-home mothers; rather, he aims to show that being a provider of the family does not necessarily make the husband oppressive to his wife. This is positive because although Majaliwa, like other port coolies, is portrayed as wild, abusive and violent at work, he does not replicate the unruly behaviour at home or in his relationship with his wife. This defies the association of wives’ domesticity with husbands’ oppressive behaviour over their wives. In other words, as R.W Connell notes in a different context, although Majaliwa’s status as a provider affords him a social privilege to oppress his wife, he has a choice about whether to accept or reject the patriarchal menu.

Examined closely, Mashavu’s relationship to the colonial economy is that she is a behind-the-scenes colonial labourer whose duty is to see to it that her husband never misses work. She therefore contributes to the stabilization of the colonial capitalist economy. She literally monitors the husband such that whenever Majaliwa feels like despairing, she is there to encourage him to go to work; sometimes even forcing him. Although this may be construed as ignorance about her husband’s working environment, it also points to her awareness of the role of a husband in providing for the family, which is by default important for the colonial economy. Whereas Mashavu is bitter about her husband missing work due to ill health, the narrator defends Majaliwa thus:

Alikuwa hapendi kulala bila ya kwenda kazini kwa kuhofia mambo nyumbani yangukuwa mrama. Shilingi mbili ambazo alizipata kwa kutwa zilitumika kwa matumizi ya nyumbani isibaki hata senti moja. Na wala si kama pesa hizo zilitosha, bali ilimlazimu azifanye zitoshe. (2)

[Majaliwa was not used to missing work for fear that things would be bad at home. The two shillings he was paid per day was not enough to provide for his family. He spent it all. The money was not enough. He would nevertheless make it enough through tight budgeting].

By Mashavu adopting a bitter attitude when Majaliwa misses work for health-related reasons, she shows her fears and ignorance. Her fear is that she will have nothing to spend on household provisions. Her failure to know her husband's work conditions makes her, by default, a colonial agent operating at the level of the family to make sure that labour, in the form of her husband, is readily available. Thus, the family is portrayed both as an emotional and economic unit where Mashavu reproduces and maintains the colonial labour force. She is even portrayed as being against a workers' strike because "kugoma ni vibaya – kwani maisha ni magumu" (27) [Laying down tools is bad because life is tough]. This caring-disciplinarian dualism of roles suggests that in analysing the depiction of the relationship between the colonized woman and the colonial economy, one needs to pay scrupulous attention to both covert and overt roles.

Whereas the aim is not to condone Mashavu's domesticity, there is need to see domesticity from another angle by inquiring, for example, about the extent to which she uses it to boost her position in the family. This entails looking at it not necessarily as a negative aspect but as an empowering situation as well. I stress that even with her home-boundedness, she still has some outlets of power. By portraying Majaliwa as both the income earner and the one charged with shopping responsibilities, Shafi suggests that Mashavu cannot even perform tasks traditionally associated with housework and is therefore contradictorily portrayed as not in full command of the domestic sphere. The second contradiction is that domesticity shifts to Majaliwa some of the work which is generally considered a woman's work. *Purdah* significantly reduces her work burden. In other words, Majaliwa is a beast of burden both at work and at his home where he is equated to an errand boy– always sent on errands by his *purdah*-observing wife. In a society that heavily worships women's domesticity, this masks the fact that domesticity can also work against men.

The portrayal of the work schedule for the port coolies is also useful in understanding the way Majaliwa relates with his wife. Majaliwa's life is a routine: he wakes up early in the morning, goes to work, goes to the market, and finally retires to his home ready for the following day's work. So,

Majaliwa alikuwa si mtembezi wa usiku, hatoki isipokuwa ana haja muhimu kwa hivyo walipomaliza kula tu alitoka nje kupunga upepo na hii ndiyo ilikuwa kawaida yake. (3)

[Majaliwa was not used to going out after work; he went out when it was absolutely necessary. After dinner he would go sit out and enjoy the breeze. This is how he spent his evenings].

This schedule is both a challenge and an opportunity. As a challenge, it introduces some individualistic tendencies in society. The individualistic values and the compactization of the Majaliwa family, the long and tiring routine of his work, and the poverty that makes him unable to afford even minimum leisure, affect how he relates with members of his extended family. This suggests that both the wife and the husband experience some form of confinement: whereas Mashavu has been confined to the home because of traditions and illiteracy, Majaliwa's after-work confinement to the home is a result of poverty, which in turn results from colonial exploitation. Whereas Mashavu is confined the whole day, Majaliwa's confinement happens only at night. This inability is a blessing in disguise in that it enhances the bond between the couple as a unit. By enhancing the bond and closeness between the couple, confinement also blurs the traditional division of labour at the level of the family. By depicting Majaliwa as a husband who is involved, responsible, nurturing and capable of doing housework in the evening, Shafi challenges the generalization that men are 'masters' in their homes. The argument is, as the family becomes smaller and individualistic, that there is a tendency for the members of the family to come together and even abrogate the traditional division of roles.

The predicament of Mashavu as a full-time housewife is accepted as long as the husband is alive. Mashavu remains bound to the domestic sphere until her husband's death. It is only after the death of Majaliwa is able to experience the challenges and opportunities of public life and even to participate in it. This mobility means that she has the opportunity to live her true status as a low-class woman who must go out to work:

Mashavu ilimbidi afanye kazi ili aweze kuendesha maisha yeye na mtoto wake Rashid ambaye sasa alikuwa mkubwa. Hakuna kazi aliyoweza kufanya isipokuwa kazi ya biashara ndogondogo kama vile kupika maandazi, kupika mboga na biashara nyingine. (8)

[In order to provide for herself and her son Rashid, Mashavu had no choice but to work. The only available option for her was engaging in petty business such as selling buns, vegetables and similar petty businesses].

The irony here is that the coming out of Mashavu is not a result of her awareness of the limitations in the private sphere as is the case for the women in *Utengano* discussed above. It is rather the precariousness of life that forces Mashavu to move into the public sphere. Even as she forces her way into the public sphere, she still must conform to the gendering of the public space and economic opportunities. Thus, she engages in food vending, a shift from free or unpaid food making in the home to the commodification of food preparation in the public space. The utilization of her domestic skills as an entry visa to the public, as Hansen notes, may be used to strengthen the woman's autonomy in the public arena. In other words, she is able to make use of her domestic skills on the public sphere. Her ability to force her way into the public sphere, however, proves that having the required performance skills is one thing, and mastering the public sphere is another. The public sphere requires different ideological skills. Thus, she surrenders almost all her valuables to pawnshops and when she begins her businesses she is portrayed as a failure:

Nyumba hiyo haikuwa na chochote ambacho kingelimfanya mtu apende kukaa humo kupumzisha nafsi yake. Rashidi hakupenda kurejea nyumbani wakati ule na alistahabu kuitisha siku ile hivi hivi akizubaa majiani. Alikuwa na hakika kwamba hata akirudi huko nyumbani, atamkuta paka amelala jikoni. (46)

[The house had nothing whatsoever that could make people relax. Since there was no food in the house, Rashid saw no point for him to go home that afternoon for fear that he might find a 'cat sleeping in the fireplace']²⁴

²⁴ Swahili speakers would normally say, "paka amelala jikoni" [A cat is sleeping in the kitchen], which implies that when there is nothing to cook in the house and the cooking place is cold (because there is no fire to warm it), and a cat would comfortably sleep there.

This mismatch between her desire to improve her life and what the economic environment offers is a significant argument. By portraying Mashavu as coming out of her domestic arena after the death of her husband, Shafi is indicating that these boundaries are not real; they are rather psychological and that crossing them simply calls for psychological readiness. Majaliwa's death is symbolic in that it is an individual's failure as a result of the economic system in which he lives. In other words, despite his hard work and commitment to an upright and decent masculinity as enshrined in the indigenous Zanzibar social system, Majaliwa dies a miserable husband. It is therefore the depicted gendering of the Zanzibar monetised colonial labour and the social cultural proscriptions which keep Mashavu in the private space and only letting her into the public space after the death of her husband. This way, they help Mashavu not to lose respectability and therefore shame her husband as being unable to provide for her thus maintaining the dominant discourse of gender relations in Zanzibar.

When Mashavu goes public, she encounters the social and racial inequities in her society. In addition to being black and poor, she is also disadvantaged because she is female. The public space is in this way portrayed as not good for a Zanzibari woman who is disadvantaged by her customs, gender and race. The subsequent death shows that it is the colonial economic inequality that has actually killed her. Whereas Mashavu's death, like that of her husband, has ripple effects on the family, it marks the limit of representation. The deaths are symbolic because they indicate the failure of the couple's dream of living like an upper class Muslim family, which they cherished throughout their lives. The precariousness of life that follows after the death of Majaliwa and the subsequent death of Mashavu indicate the failure of Mashavu to appropriate the public space and merge it with the private one to her advantage.

The portrayal of Mashavu as going public after the death of her husband and facing the challenges of urban life is a breakthrough and may be seen as an attempt to update the image of women in Tanzanian fiction, especially if they are looked at from the history of both the nation and its fiction. The time in which *Kuli* was written was a period when the post-independence Tanzania government was advocating for the shift from urban development to rural development. This period is characterized by rampant 'return-to-the-village' campaigns and motifs in Tanzanian cities and fiction respectively. Penina Mhando's play *Hatia* (1972) [Guilt] concludes with her heroine returning to the village. Prince Kagwema's *Chausiku's Dozen* (1983) exemplifies Agnes, a seasoned town prostitute, returning to the village where she undergoes metamorphosis and becomes a 'good' village woman. Ndyanao Balisidya's *Shida* (1975) [Hardship] shows Shida and her boyfriend returning to the village and settling as

husband and wife. In *Utengano*, Maimuna settles with Kabi, a new husband after her encounters with heartless men in town. Baka Abdul's Salome in *Salome* (1972) returns to the village for reformation.

Mashavu's decision to face the heartless urban life, like the strong and industrious Adaku in Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*, is an example of women attempting to face the urban challenges in the absence of their husbands. These cases are enough to argue that Shafi creates Mashavu as a woman who attempts to break into the public sphere in a colonial situation. *Kuli* is, in fact, one of the few novels written in this period that does not advise workers or their wives to leave the urban places in favour of the rural spaces. Unlike Adaku, Mashavu is not developed to the extent of challenging the Islamo-Swahili patriarchy, the racial inequalities and colonial exploitation.

Conclusion

The analysis of the two novels reveals that the contact between Tanzanian communities, the colonialists and their accomplices (such as some Indians) had far-reaching impacts in re-organizing the existing gender relations and the organization of the family. It reveals that in addition to the portrayal of the community as regulating the pre-colonial gender relations, the colonial setting is further complicated by introducing new players and policies which variously shape gender relations. The representation shows that the pre-colonial Islamic and slave/class heritages are also manipulated in this period in order to serve the interests of the colonialists. Furthermore, the portrayal of the figure of an affluent Indian and the Zanzibari upper-class lifestyles, as aspirational socio-economic identities, shape gender relations as well. The portrayed colonialists and colonial policies treat urban women and rural women differently. The two novels show that peasantisation is for rural women whereas domesticity is for urban women. Domesticity is therefore, portrayed as an urban phenomenon. The analysis shows that domesticity is both a danger and a blessing to a woman, because it works to shift more responsibilities onto the man, almost reducing him to an errand boy. The depiction of the lovely relationship between Mashavu and Majaliwa challenges the link between domesticity and reinforcement of patriarchal relations, which is always taken for granted.

The portrayal of the impact of mobility on characters' lives is that it enables some characters to achieve social mobility as is the case with Kamuyuga and his wife. Their social mobility is, however, constraining the woman. Men's spatial mobility makes women de facto household

heads or 'semi-widows', especially in cases of long periods of absence of a husband. This is portrayed to be leading to fractured and unstable families. In search of survival, men are portrayed as engaging in domestic labour which forces them to display situational masculinity. The display of situational masculinity is part of an adaptation strategy.

Compared to the representation of the pre-colonial period discussed in chapter two, the depicted colonial period does not offer any optimism in terms of gender relations. Both indigenous and Islamic patriarchies have colluded with the colonial economy to make gender relations more unequal. The destiny of female characters is either to be cloistered as it is with Kamuyuga's wife in *The Gathering Storm* or death as it is the case with Mashavu's end in *Kuli*. The uniqueness of gender relations in this period is due to the pervasiveness of state-sponsored racism and class hierarchies on the one hand and the pre-colonial heritages such as Islam.

Chapter Four: Gender and the Nationalist Struggle Economy

Introduction

Feminist theorists working in the fields of gender and nationalism have theorised concerning and revealed the gendered nature of nationalism. They argue that nationalism is gendered because “it draws on socially constructed ideas of masculinity and femininity to shape female and male participation in nation building” and is “differentially marked by masculine and feminine systems of value” (Boehmer, *Stories* 4). Prevalent in the works of scholars such as Cynthia Enloe, Elleke Boehmer, Anne McClintock, Nira Yuval-Davis, Floya Anthias, and Joanne Nagel among others, is the notion that nationalism is often theorised as a patriarchal project where women appear passively as symbols or metaphors. Consequently, the labour of women in and for the nation is overshadowed by that of men, who are generally seen as normative nationalists. Indeed, what McClintock calls the “feminist theory of nationalism” provides a summary of the key tenets of this body of scholarship. This theory, she claims, is strategically four-fold:

Investigating the gendered formation of sanctioned male theories; bringing into historical visibility women's active cultural and political participation in national formations; bringing nationalist institutions into critical relation with other social structures and institutions [and] paying scrupulous attention to the structures of racial, ethnic and class power that continue to bedevil privileged forms of feminism. (90)

The strength of this theory lies in its inclusion of variables such as race, class and ethnicity in reconstructing nationalist narratives. McClintock's emphasis on the variables articulates the concerns of intersectionality theorists like Crenshaw, Collins and Mohanty who have questioned the perception of women as a homogenous group and gender as a stand-alone identity. The major limitation of this theorisation, however, is that it presents the woman as the exclusive object of study, as Nagel warns:

If nations [and nationalisms] are indeed gendered institutions as much recent scholarship asserts, then to limit the examination of gender in politics to an investigation of women only misses a major [...] way in which gender shapes politics. (243)

I concur with Nagel's criticism because the theory conflates gender with women. The point is that the position and labour of women can best be appreciated if they are examined in relation to those of men.

The response to the marginalization of women in the nationalist narrative has involved attempts to reclaim the central place which women occupied in the anticolonial struggles. This is evident in studies by such scholars as Tanya Lyons, Karen Bouwer, and Irene Straunton. In the context of Tanzania, Amandina Lihamba, Tina Steiner, Susan Geiger among many other scholars, reflect on this marginalization. These studies have the woman as the exclusive object of investigation. Furthermore, most of these studies tend to be in favour of the 'great woman' approach – studying influential female politicians such as Bibi Titi Mohamed alongside the normative male nationalists. The 'great woman' approach adopted by some scholars does not necessarily include the participation of all women as a category. I argue that we cannot merge the labour of prominent women with that of ordinary women since each of the two categories represents a distinct class.

In reading Emmanuel Makaidi's *The Serpent-Hearted Politician* and Adam Shafi's *Vuta n' kuvute*, this chapter builds on the representation of the colonial economy and gender relations, which were discussed in chapter three, by focusing on the anticolonial struggle economy. Studying the representation of the anticolonial struggle economy facilitates a deeper understanding of the socio-economic statuses of men and women in Tanzanian societies under colonial rule, in particular the last decade of colonialism. The current chapter examines the representation of the ordinary woman as an object of study and it examines how she relates with the man in these struggles. The chapter argues that gender relations in the depicted nationalist phase are shaped by the existing colonial economic structures and Islamo-Swahili culture that predate colonialism. The chapter further argues that the gendered colonial economic policies on rights and access to resources in the depicted nationalist period are the major factors that shape how men and women participate and relate in the struggle for independence. It is patriarchy and colonially-inspired economic configuration that, through the 'division of labour', direct, as Rich notes, "what part women [and men] shall or shall not play" (57) in the public nationalist sphere.

In the selected novels, the alliance between patriarchy and colonial economic shifts produce a gender roles ideology that is reflected in the unequal resource allocation and society's investments on men and women which then produce disparities in education and resource access and ownership. Such disparities determine the differences in the labour that men and

women provide to the anticolonial struggle; shape the way men and women participate; and determine the way they relate with one another in the struggle for independence. Because of this disparity, women are portrayed as passive subjects deployed by the male nationalists to contribute to the struggle on the male's terms and conditions. Women are 'invited' and deployed as 'objects' which cannot determine or influence the terms of their engagements and labour in the struggle. Secondly, the novels indicate that patriarchal and colonially- induced limitations notwithstanding, women are subjects who are capable of challenging these limitations and or appropriating some of the colonial/patriarchal stereotypes and gendered economic policies to facilitate their participation in the struggle.

The novels focus on the 'wind of change' that characterized Africa, in particular, British colonies in the fifties. *The Serpent-Hearted Politician* is set in a fictitious British colony called Sanya. Sanya's nationalistic movement is organized under The Sanyan Africanist Party (PASA) led by a semi-literate chairperson, Chioko. Reflecting the 1950s general wave of struggle for political independence in African countries, the novel depicts the tendency of most African nationalist struggles at the time recalling their western-educated 'sons' to lead independence struggles. The Sanyan Africanist Party, for instance, is shown as recruiting a London-based Sanyan, Pancras who had lived there for as long as he could remember. He forgoes his cosy London job in favour of the political leadership in Sanya. When he assumes office he becomes more of a dictator than a leader: he changes the constitution without consulting the party, tolerates no opposition, and becomes the party himself. By using the fictional country of Sanya, the novel can be read as a tale of any African country that experienced British colonial rule, most particularly countries that got independence without spilling blood, such as Tanzania and Malawi, to mention a few. I argue here that even if the imaginary country of Sanya bears striking resemblances to Tanzania's nationalist politics and the early years of self rule and is by a Tanzanian author, I do not intend to conflate the two countries. The second observation is that the narrative in the text is built more on Malawi than Tanzania because like the fictional Pancras, the late Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda had lived for so long in Britain before being recalled back home. Even the country's name Sanya itself could be a deliberate inversion of Nyasa, just like the use of Sanyaland sounds like an artistic distortion of Nyasaland, the colonial name for present-day Malawi. These aside, it is the way the text was received and the way the Tanzanian readership was able to recognize the satirical elements in the text that forms one of the novel's strong points.

Mwaifuge's analysis of *The Serpent-Hearted Politician* focuses on the representation of nationalist and post-independence politics and he finds striking resemblances between the fictional Sanya and Tanzania. He writes: "Makaidi's portrayal of Dr. Pancras alludes to Nyerere's leadership style" (120) because like Dr. Pancras, "Nyerere appears to have been the sole decision-maker whose decisions are final" (121). He concludes that even the fictional "Mass Liberty Organization (MLO) appears similar to TANU. Like TANU, MLO's power becomes more concentrated since no other political party is allowed to flourish in Sanya" (121). Mwaifuge's reading of the text therefore suggests that even though the country of Sanya is imagined, its satirical approach to African politics is obvious to the Tanzanian reader. To strengthen his argument, he augments his analysis of the text with an interview he had with the author, in particular the way the text was received by the then ruling political establishment. Although he relies on the information supplied to him by the author and he never seeks to balance this by including Nyerere's view (presumably because at the time of his research Nyerere was dead), he nevertheless documents Makaidi's view of how the text was received and the subsequent consequences he faced as a result of writing the novel. He writes:

The writer of the novel was once a Director in the Ministry of Labour and Youth Development in the 1980s. In 1982 the novel *The Serpent-Hearted Politician* was published. He was summoned at the State House by the then president Nyerere. He was ordered by the president to tell his publisher to stop selling and circulating the novel. After a few months he was shifted to the Ministry of Education and was given a desk without a specific job. In 1983 he decided to resign from work. Makaidi claimed that Nyerere read the novel and claimed that it was talking about him and his government. Makaidi said that he told Nyerere that the novel was a fiction talking about nobody in particular. (171-172)

Mwaifuge's analysis of the text is significant for this study. Although he does not discuss how gender roles portrayed in the text were received by the readers, his endeavour to demonstrate how the novel's satirical elements were resented speaks to my argument that this novel can also be read as Tanzania's tale of gender relations in the nationalist period.

The quest for independence is also a focus of Shafi in *Vuta n' Kuvute*. Denge, a Russia-educated young man, with the help of his lover, Yasmin, is leading the anticolonial campaigns in Zanzibar against the British. Portraying the struggle against a backdrop of racialized and

classed Zanzibar society, the love relationship between Denge and Yasmin, and their commitment to anticolonial struggles, becomes a complex tale of an anticolonial struggle that is intricately entangled in a multiplicity of factors including race, class, gender and the economy. Shafi weaves together the two characters' romantic love with the love of the nation. Their love is subsequently linked to the fate of the struggle for independence on the one hand and challenging patriarchy on the other.

The narrative focus on Pancras in *The Serpent-Hearted Politician* and on Denge in *Vuta n'kuvute* symbolizes the 'maleness' of the struggles. This 'maleness' of nationalism, as Boehmer notes, also accounts for the absence of powerful women in many nationalist narratives, and it reflects the disparities in access to society's resources and the overall investment in men and women; thus, the gendering of nationalist labour. The independence struggles depicted by these authors begin as 'elite' and turn out as popular 'man-woman' side-by-side struggles. The uniqueness of the novels lies in the fact that they feature ordinary women working side by side with male nationalist figures. This offers me an entry point to address the marginalization of women by analysing the representation of the participation of the ordinary woman in the depicted nationalist scenario and highlighting how she relates to the male nationalist. Adopting such a perspective, I pay attention specifically to the 'masculinisation' of the depicted anticolonial struggle and its implication for the participation of ordinary women and for gender relations. I offer an analysis of the image of a visionary, idealistic and intellectual 'male' nationalist; how this image is deployed on a nationalist stage; and its relationship to that of the ordinary woman against a background of nationalist gendered labour relations in the depicted society and period.

Although nationalism is theorised and subsequently portrayed by Shafi and Makaidi as a 'masculine' project resulting as McClintock notes, from the "frustrations and aspirations of men" (354), such a perception does not necessarily remove ordinary women from participating in nationalist struggles. The woman participates in these struggles in two ways: first as an actor 'invited' by the male nationalist. She is made to dance, as Boehmer notes, "the master's dance to the master's voice" (*Stories* 51). I examine the spaces/openings or labour created for the ordinary woman by the 'male' nationalist and how such spaces are created and what they mean for the woman and gender relations in general. This trajectory applies mostly to *The Serpent Hearted Politician*. The second facet, conspicuous in *Vuta n'kuvute*, challenges this 'invitation' or 'dancing' as dictated by the master's voice. Here, the woman is able to design her own forms of engagement and labour in the struggle. I pay

particular attention to the representation of how the ordinary woman creates labour for herself on a male-dominated nationalist stage and how these spaces open the door for her participation. I emphasize that in other situations the woman uses her femininity or creates her own version of femininity which helps her to participate in the movement. Shafi's female characters, for example, adopt what, for lack of a better term, I call a 'masquerade of femininity' where female characters deliberately over-display their womanliness and strategically use it to easily participate in the struggle. Adopting Luce Irigaray's definition of women's masquerade as "what women do in order to recuperate some elements of desire, to participate in man's desires, but at the price of denouncing their own" (133), I argue that this strategy is useful for two reasons: the colonialist cannot differentiate the masquerading behaviour from genuine femininity and in the nationalist battlefield and in the eyes of the colonial officials, the male is the real enemy of the colonial government and not the woman. Through this perspective, I demonstrate that the ordinary woman is an active, effective and committed partner in the struggle.

The novels' representation of ordinary women interacting with male elites is a case of two economically and socially distinct classes of people existing side by side. I examine how the novelists represent the labour of a poor, jobless and illiterate town woman/girl (often considered a prostitute) in the struggle for independence. I probe how she relates with her male (often an educated) counterpart. Here, gender as an aspect of differentiation is understood in relation to another aspect of class. I consider whether these variables play any central role in the way men and women relate; I examine which of the two variables is more influential; or the extent to which the two intersect. The second concern that preoccupies the novelists is the link between the public and the private spheres; in particular, how the private is important for the political public. This private sphere, as Carole Pateman notes, "is politically relevant" (3). I argue that regardless of whether the woman is confined to the home or hearth or not, her role to the nationalist struggle is significant. That is her labour contribution to the nationalist labour pool. Employing one of the basic tenets of feminism, these scholars have sought "to prove that the personal or private sphere is in fact political," (Bouwer 9) and seek to demonstrate the "implication of the domestic in the public" (Andrade 21). Through this perspective, it is possible to recognize the labour of ordinary women by putting value to their often trivialized labour-contribution to nationalist struggles. I reason that even if men are represented as figureheads in the narratives, it does not mean that women are less important, or that they contribute less to the struggle, play an insignificant or no role at all.

I begin with the analysis of *The Serpent-Hearted Politician*, which, although set in a fictitious nation of Sanya, can be read as a national tale of Tanzania. I analyse the representation of the different mechanisms of exclusion of women in the nationalist politics, and then proceed to argue that, despite this exclusion, there are other openings through which women, and ordinary women in particular, participate in nation formation. In the next section, I focus on the journey of Yasmin, a female character in *Vuta n'kuvute*. Yasmin's journey begins with her attempt to escape from a suffocating married life; she challenges the practice of *purdah* and arranged marriages; she gets involved in the political public; and ends with racial reconciliation through her marriage with Bukhet. I show how these constrictions are part of Zanzibar's historical heritage as well as how this journey is significant to the nationalist struggle that is waged against British colonialism. Finally, I demonstrate how Yasmin's struggle for freedom at an individual level is merged with the struggle for national independence.

The Nationalist male and the Ordinary Woman in *The Serpent-Hearted Politician*

Makaidi's central character, Pancras, is invited to lead Sanya's struggle for independence. Cashing in on Sanyans' ignorance, Pancras curses the people who invited him and divides and rules them in the course of the struggle. "Pancras is the party and the party is Pancras" (81), the narrator explicates. First he falls out with the executive party committee (male only) and later on with the youth league. Through political mystification and trickery, Pancras bullies his political opponents and members from the two major organs while camouflaging himself as a true nationalist leader among the women (in particular the women's league and the women artistes). This party is "yours keep it or lose it" (102), he assures women. Portrayed as an opportunist and as a "serpent-hearted man," as the narrator describes him, Pancras betrays the Sanyan cause by siding with the colonial government when the latter promises to protect him and through political gimmicking, making him more popular. His opportunistic behaviour and his mercenary-type relationship with the British government strain his relationship with all the Sanyans and in the denouement, his leadership reaches an abrupt end when all the Sanyans unite to remove him from office. By portraying his arrival, his eventual assumption of leadership and working differently with the various sections of the society, and finally his exit, as bringing all Sanyans together, Makaidi underscores the theme of men-women side-by-side anticolonial struggle.

I look at Pancras's relationship with women as an example of a political alliance and one that is specifically shaped by the political economy of the period. It is a patron-client relationship,

which contributes to the objectification of the woman – the perception and/or treatment of a woman as an object by male nationalists. Such a relationship, as Scott notes, reflects “an imbalance in exchange between the two partners” and the “disparity in their relative wealth, power, and status” (93). The sexual objectification of young girls and the female dancers indicates the power imbalance between the male and female and the confluence of gender, class, colonial and traditional patriarchy, that marginalise and objectify women in the depicted period (the 1950s). The second aspect of the alliance between men and women in the nationalist struggle is the portrayal of female dancers as political mobilizers and members of the party’s women’s league. By dancing to praise the leaders, the performers symbolically accept the leaders’ authority over them. The power that the dancers have is that they are able to translate and interpret the ‘male’ nationalist ideology into songs and/or dances. To this end, they can capitalize on the dances and fuse the praise with the social commentary functions of the dances.

The foregrounding of Pancras as a member of the political elite in the narrative and male elites in the theories of nationalism such as those advanced by Karl Deustch, Joshua Fishman, Ernest Gellner and Antony Smith does not mean that these elites are the originators of the movements; rather, they are agents who, according to Deustch, “possess the personal gifts or material resources to move symbols and masses towards desired social political regroupings” (15) and who, as Schmidt notes, are able to mobilize masses “around pre-existing grievances and promising to solve them through the attainment of national independence” (982). Makaidi captures this argument. At the opening of the novel the reader is introduced to a male-only committee discussing the plight of the people of Sanya including “the intensification of the struggle [...], the political situation in Sanya, the tactics to be employed and all that” (1). The male-dominated committee is the highest party organ entrusted with making key nationalist decisions. This early 1950s period in Sanyan politics is dominated by the political elite. When PASA is transformed into MLO under the leadership of Pancras, Suzie becomes the first and only female member in a sixty-member MLO committee. However, her contributions in the party committee debates are trivialized and portrayed as childish. Trivialization here is intertwined with the idea of objectification – the perception and or treatment of a woman as an object by male nationalists. Both cases involve a reductive ‘gaze’ directed at her.

The highlight is that at the peak of the struggle for the liberation of Sanya, Pancras is portrayed as a politically powerful politician wrestling the colonialists from their seat of power. At this point, he develops a strange liking for special treatment-cum-recognition. As

part of this recognition, he proposes to the executive committee that he needs a “kind of status symbol or office insignia [that] would distinguish him from other lesser party officials [in order] to match [his] personality with the high party office he held” (42). Among the proposals by the committee members, Suzie suggests that Pancras should be given an expensive Limousine – a Rolls-Royce, Cadillac or Mercedes Benz. Asked about how a limousine would help the struggle, Suzie responds: “The thing would cause envy to the colony’s Governor. The colonial ‘overseer’ would feel eclipsed, thus beg his masters for an early exit from our land” (42).

Suzie’s response is a simple answer for a supposedly complex question. Her proposal raises questions about her seriousness as a political actor. Like Eiron, the character in Greek comedy, Suzie may be pretending to be less intelligent than she is. She may also be intending to be ironical and therefore critical of Pancras. Since the function of irony is to describe the attitude of the speaker towards a situation, there is need, as Ellen Winner and Howard Gardner note, to understand the attitude of mind of the speaker and the response of the listeners. In the present case, we need to understand Suzie’s attitude of mind by demonstrating that she neither believes what she says nor does she want the audience to take it literally. Given her proposal and the reason she puts forward, it is questionable as to why the male members come to her support. By so doing, these men might be expressing some kind of gallantry –polite attention, support and respect given by men to women because they believe women are underprivileged. This kind of respect is referred to as “benevolent sexism” by Mazrui which he defines as a

[F]orm of discrimination which is protective or generous towards the otherwise underprivileged gender [...] just like when men volunteer to carry heavy suitcases on behalf of women, to open doors for them and [...] to pay restaurant bills for themselves as well as for their woman-date [...], to vacate their seats on overcrowded buses in favor of women passenger [and in sea disasters where] women and children would have priority access to the life boats. (87)

Seeing this as gallantry, it then follows that Suzie is a minority and underprivileged in the committee debates. By portraying her as illogical, Makaidi participates in trivializing her labour. She becomes a trivial participant whose labour is not taken seriously as evidenced by the adoption of a flywhisk as a symbol for Pancras’s power and leadership. She is a victim of

the men's fake respect and approval. Here, trivialization constructs hierarchy based on notions of male dominance and competence and female marginality and incompetence.

Apart from analysing the representation of women's direct labour in the Sanyan nationalist party committees, another fruitful way of interrogating gender relations in the Sanyan struggle for independence would be to analyse indirect ways through which these women participate in Sanya's nationalism. This requires asserting interconnectedness between the private and the public spheres or problematizing their separation. As Schmidt notes, this means focusing on less conventional modes of participation and unveiling less visible forms or ordinary ways of engagement of women in the national formation. 'Ordinary ways' should mean ways of participation often not recognized because they are seen as natural and obvious. For example, in chapter three I argued that a woman's domestic labour is her labour to the capitalist colonial project. In the nationalist economy, the same labour is linked to nationalist struggles. It means defining activities such as reproduction, cooking and taking care of the family, taking care of the sick and the elderly, as well as taking care of the husbands as activities which are carried out by women in private as politically significant. Such activities, as Yuval-Davis and Anthias claim, are national duties. According to Andrade, this is a fruitful way because "domestic labour is part of the labour of a collectivity, for instance; that women's taking it on makes possible a certain kind of public participation for the men who are freed of it" (21). This approach puts political value to an ordinary woman's services and labour in the private and domestic spheres or "at the level of everyday activity," (367) as Brennan suggests, and contributes to the struggle for independence while defining women's relations with men.

Women's labour of taking care of male nationalists is captured by Makaidi when he portrays Pancras's first night in Sanya. On arrival in Sanya, Pancras finds that the party committee has organized for him a young girl, Rose Dandzie, as part of "Sanyan hospitality to help him 'make' his bed for the night" (23). Such hospitality-cum-objectification of the girl in the nationalist cause features also in Peter Abrahams' *A Wreath for Udomo* (1979), a novel which also examines an African nationalist movement and its icon, the London-educated Michael Udomo. A girl is given to Michael by Selina, a business-woman and nationalist sympathizer, in order to relieve his tension: "She's for your rest, Udomo. There are no women in prison. Look at her. She is young and beautiful. She's untouched but she has been trained in our ways. She will comfort you in this hour" (162). Selina recruits another girl, Maria, for Mhendi, another nationalist. Maria, "a sweet simple woman," as Mhendi describes her, is like

Makaidi's Rose, recruited to serve the nationalist cause using her body. This is their labour in the nationalist cause despite being sexist and demeaning.

The men on the PASA committee consider Rose to be important for Pancras in order to make him feel at home. Thus, when Chioko, the presiding president, infers that "Pancras needed persuasion so as to return home [...] that Pancras's acceptance of the party presidency was something to be worked for," the committee feels that they are duty-bound to please him lest he "contests the party offer or [...] resists, if not refuses it" (5). 'Offering' Rose is part of their efforts to give a pleasant reception to a hesitant, and apparently demanding Pancras. Rose's positioning indicates a gendered sacrifice she must make as a woman to nationalist struggles; a sacrifice and contribution that is framed by the nationalist male. Her labour in the nationalist cause is to help Pancras not to have a foggy mind on his first night in Sanya, which would allow him to concentrate on finding solutions to the problems that bedevil the Sanyan anticolonial struggle. It is a 'sacrifice to the nation', but through serving the individual nationalists and masculine desires.

When the narrator infers that Rose is given out, he indicates the power bestowed on the giver (the male nationalists) over what is given out (the girl). Here, it is not a case of the male pimping the female, but one where the socio-economic power of the nationalist elites allows them to allocate the girl to Pancras based on their terms and not the woman's terms. This 'hospitality' resonates with the culture of arranged marriages among the pre-colonial Kerewe in *Myombekere* that was discussed in chapter two and with Yasmin's forced marriage to Raza in *Vuta n'kuvute*, which is explored later in this chapter. However, the difference is that while it is the patriarchal heads of families who exercise the right to marry off their daughters in the depicted pre-colonial period and colonial Zanzibar, in the nationalist period it is the male political elites in *The Serpent-Hearted Politician*, and Selina, a female member of the elite in *A Wreath for Udomo*, who direct the sexualized deployment of girls like Rose and Maria in the nationalist struggle. Understanding this power of elites over girls provides insights about the 1950s when both traditional and colonial patriarchy collaborated to put the ordinary woman at a disadvantage. The recruitment of girls such as Rose is a 'blindspot' that challenges the notion of the nationalist movement slogan of ending all forms of oppression. The logic however is that the girls help the struggle indirectly through attending to male desires. The girl's gender, class, and age all locate her as an object deployed according to the interests of men. The power of the giver is one of the many factors that may explain the

deployment of the girls as sexual objects. Rose is treated as a tool meant to serve the desire of the male. As an object, she is automatically denied self-determination and autonomy.

This portrayal of a girl who is conscripted to the nationalist stage as a sex object is also captured by fellow Tanzanian writer Prince Kagwema in his novel *Married Love is a Plant*. The novel centres on Ufwa, an assistant to the white District Officer in colonial Tanzania. Ufwa has a sexual affair with Eva Schroeder, a German nurse. Ufwa's boss, a racist commissioner, is outraged at this interracial relationship – an abominable thing in colonial Tanganyika. In an effort to cut off the relationship, he transfers Ufwa to another part of the colony while Eva is also transferred elsewhere. Ufwa's relationship and relocation is met with excitement by his constituents. When he goes to bid farewell to them

[M]any people shouted at the peak of their voices that when he got down to his job in Kisarawe, he should not only check on the German girl in Dar es Salaam but he should get hold of as many British girls as possible. (84)

Here, Ufwa is asked to take revenge on all white women but specifically the British, something that symbolises people's resentful attitudes towards colonialism. This sentiment is repeated when Ufwa is sent to the UK for an on-job training programme. In the UK, he is advised by Obel, a fellow Tanzanian, to sleep with British girls in retaliation for British colonialism because these girls need to "pay their national debt to your country albeit in kind" (12). A similar portrayal of interracial sexual relationships appear in *Season of Migration to the North* (1997), a novel by Tayeb Salih.

Makaidi, Kagwema, and Abrahams deal with the relationship of the woman with her nation. In anticolonial struggles, the woman is used in two ways: firstly, she is used as a sex object to gratify male nationalists. This is the case with Rose and the girls in Abrahams' novel. Moreover, inter-racial relationships become embedded in the nationalist struggles. The white woman becomes an object towards which male nationalists want to direct their anger and express their masculinity. By showing that they have access to the white woman, they seek to challenge the power and racial superiority of their arch-rival, the colonialist, who is normatively white and male. These men, like Jean Veneuse in Fanon's *Black Skin White Masks*, seek "to revenge [themselves] on a European woman for everything that her ancestors have inflicted on [theirs] throughout centuries" (69). For Jean, a Negro, Fanon writes, having a sexual affair with a white woman shows that he is loved like a white man and that he is a 'man.' It indicates that he has regained his status as a 'man,' a status that was robbed from

him by colonial emasculation. Jean sees inter-racial sex as a “noble road that leads to total realization” (69). He notes that through sex, the colonized man becomes a “proud master of European woman,” and he then has “a certain tang of proud revenge” (69).

Like the wife of the Indian shopkeeper in *The Gathering Storm* in chapter three, the French girl that Jean sleeps with is a boundary-marker for her nation and race. The fear of racial contamination held by the Bulembe Indians in *The Gathering Storm*, the DC in *Married Love is a Plant* and in other novels such as *Uhuru Street* and *Vuta n'kuvute* point to the restrictions often imposed on the Asian/white woman's sexual freedom as a marker of racial purity. In being so restricted, they are “subsumed symbolically into the national body politic as its boundary and metaphoric limit” (McClintock 62). Elsewhere, both McClintock and Gaitskell express a similar view with regard to white Afrikaans women in apartheid South Africa. The objectification of Rose in the name of Sanyan hospitality and other women reviewed in other novels would pass for what Mazrui categorizes as “malignant sexism” which is “the most pervasive and most insidious” subjecting “women to economic manipulation, sexual exploitation, and political marginalization” (92).

The fact that Pancras has been in the UK for as long as he remembers is perhaps the reason why the whole scheme of the committee to use Rose to entertain him fails. He is worried:

“Could it be that, this is some man's wife?” [...] “or worse still, could she be a trap?” The thought of a possible scandal terribly worried him [...] To be safe Pancras switched on, electric lights and Rose had to make do with her sleep for the rest of the night, under flood lights. (24)

Pancras is an alien in the country he claims to be his own. His stay in the UK has also enlightened him with regard to consensual sex. His fear of a possible political scandal reveals a rational person whose concern is to fulfil his mission first. This fear, however, defies his logic of consensual sex as he does not seem to bother to know who Rose is; whether she has been spoken to or the grounds on which she is offered to him for the night. The irony, however, is that Rose perceives it as a missed opportunity. In summing up her night with Pancras, Rose is of the view that Pancras is “one mess of a cold man. He is for all practical purposes a ‘she,’ save for the shrubs up him and the useless potato on his southern region” (27). Given the high public profile Pancras enjoys as a national liberator, a messiah or Moses, one can understand Rose's misgivings and her spiteful comment about Pancras' failure to behave like a ‘real man.’ Her comment indicates that she is a willing person. She had been

spoken to by the committee about how the night was to be spent. The comment explains her disappointment and her failure to capitalize and strategize on her night with Pancras. She is socialized to use her body as her ‘bargaining card’ in a period that offers very little for the girls’ socio-economic advancement – the 1950s.

Illuminating this seemingly ‘trivial’ sexualized labour and showing its connection with the struggle provides a way of making the ordinary woman’s labour to the nationalist cause visible, despite the ethical complexities that mark her contribution. In the following section, I examine the most direct participation of the woman in the political public as a dancer and performer in political rallies.

Female Dancers and the Patron-client Relationship in *The Serpent-Hearted Politician*

The novel’s portrayal of direct labour of women in the Sanyan anticolonial politics is captured by the women’s performances of the *chioda* dance – a female-only-dance performed at political rallies. In the course of nationalist struggles that follow, the dancers not only become the backbone of political campaigns, but also form the party’s women’s wing. The slogan of the party is: “Where you see Pancras there are Sanyan Women” (102). Through the portrayal of *Chioda* dancers, Makaidi shows that any successful Sanyan political campaign needs these female dancers to mobilize an audience. Also, in the depicted dance performances, there is power play between the performers and those who are praised by the performers. The power of the dancers is portrayed through their ingenuity to translate the party’s ideology into songs. The patron-client relationship between the dancers and nationalist leaders indicates a dimension of objectification that appears to show that the dancers are owned by the politicians. This relationship touches on the twin aspects of gender and class. Scott’s theory of patron-client politics defines this relationship as

a special case of dyadic (two-person) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socioeconomic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services, to the patron. (92)

Scott further notes that in this kind of relationship there is no coercion but rather reciprocity determines the relationship. However, “the balance of benefits may heavily favor the patron” (93).

Three facets can be identified with regard to the use of dances in anticolonial nationalism in Tanzania. The first, as Geiger notes, included female politicians and activists performing panegyrics at nationalist political rallies. The second category, she notes, involved the use of established traditional dance associations or groups to convey nationalist messages, mobilize membership, and even raise funds for the party. The third, as Emily Callaci notes, included channelling nationalist messages through commercial dancehalls where the messages were embedded in the Western ballroom performances. Therefore, dance (both in its traditional and western forms) has been used in Tanzanian nationalist politics as a vehicle of decolonization.²⁵ The depicted *Chioda* performance is something like a version of the first facet. These are specially organized performers whose duty is to perform at political rallies in praise of the leaders, the party and its ideology. Their duty is to ‘sing’ politics and ‘sing’ for politics as the requirement of the patron-client relationship and by implication as their labour for the national cause.

Despite the fact that Pancras’ airport reception brings together a ‘unisex’ audience, in addition to the female dancers, other women have been “specifically hired to do this sort of shouting at the airport on Pancras’s arrival that day” (19). This reflects both the economic power of the hirers and the unequal relationship between male nationalists and the ordinary women. Through ululating and shouting, the women contribute to the nationalist ‘labour pool’. The women’s dances boost the ego of the male nationalist icon in much the same way sex is used as a form of manipulating the woman’s body intended to make Pancras feel at home.

This ‘hiring’ not only underscores the patron-client relationship, but also communicates what in modern politics may be known as ‘crowd renting,’ which is a common strategy used by politicians to create an impression that they are popular. This is a common political ego-boosting antic employed by unpopular African politicians and political parties to garner support of the masses. In capturing this, Makaidi relates that the ‘hired’ and ululating women and *chioda* dancers lead to a dramatic change from the ‘cold’ Pancras to a warm and overzealous Pancras. The transformation is swift:

²⁵ See Clyde Mitchel’s examination of ‘Kalela’ dances in the then Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Terrence Ranger’s examination of dance and politics in colonial East Africa. They note that songs and dances in the contexts of the nationalist struggle of African contexts helped to define the motives and causes of the struggle.

Pancras came down the plane with a marked measure of hesitancy. Those who watched him closely on arrival believed he did so less [than] willingly! The man's waves were weak and belated, much to the annoyance of the heretofore enthused Africans, who were there to welcome him [but after the dance, ululations and claps from the hired crowd] Pancras was warm enough to rise to the occasion. (18-19)

The presence of the crowd gives Pancras strength, inspiration, encouragement and the feeling of being wanted and, therefore being at home. Although here it is the female dancers' ability to boost the egos of the male politicians that is portrayed, Chinua Achebe's *Morning Yet on Creation Day: Essays by Chinua Achebe* details, in particular, the actual participation of women in Tanzanian politics as political elites and how they outperformed their male counterparts. Attending one of TANU political rallies, he notes how male politicians failed to impress the crowd; kept them "unmoved" and "unimpressed" but "things began to warm up and look a little familiar when Madam Bibi Titi took to the stage. Within two minutes of Bibi Titi's getting to her feet, the placid crowd had been galvanised [and] the crowd practically rolled on the ground with laughter" (72-73).

Another function of these dances is to communicate the party's political philosophy, which is rendered through the dancers' appropriation of the colonial *zumzum* nursery rhyme. The rhyme is appropriated by the women singers to ridicule British colonial policies on education and agriculture on the one hand, and to praise the role of PASA and later on MLO on the other. According to this song, everything in colonial Sanya is *zumzum* such as the *zumzum* colonial education which only produces standard eight pupils who know nothing "save the singing of that *zumzum* song [and] singing of God Save the Queen"²⁶ (46) Similarly, the British colonial agriculture policy is *zumzum* and has turned Sanya into "a cabbage country" where the "[t]he only thing they seem to master is the growing of the useless vegetable, the cabbage" (46). Through the *zumzum* performances, entertainment is fused with women's critiques of the colonial projects in the process. The fusion problematizes the patron-client relationship that seems to be the dominant factor. These women are not simply participating due to the patronage of the male nationalists; they are also contributing their labour to the larger nationalist cause. The *zumzum* rally "was the turning point both for MLO and Pancras [...] And from then on, MLO's numerical superiority changed into a people's bond. MLO, to

²⁶ The British national anthem.

the Africans of Sanya, became their religion!” (46). The political fortune of MLO is thus attributed to the *zumzum* singers’ use of song as a tool to express resistance to colonialism.

Pancras’ manipulation of women is another aspect that the novel portrays through his relationship with the women’s league and artistes. The turning of the unpopular Pancras to women defines him as opportunistic while it also defines the women as easily co-opted. In one such instance he promises women more “availability of ladies underpants” (100), a cheap and trivial promise but one that is meant to garner women’s support. When he places them at the centre, it is only because he wants women to fight his battles with the executive committee, the youth league and Sanyan men:

The usually versatile MLO Youth League, whose members were reputed for selfless services to the party, was virtually replaced with the women’s *chioda* artistes! At Pancras’s now few rallies, instead of his speeches being preceded by an MLO Youth choir, there were the *chioda* dancers in attendance. (102)

Then his row with the executive committee, and by extension, all Sanyan men; the narrator makes it clear that

Pancras despised the Sanyan men, was known to all [...] he looked the Sanyan men down [sic]; took a Sanyan man as stupid and unintelligent [...because] “if they were intelligent,” he would say “they wouldn’t have called me back!” (102)

Pancras’ strategy is to “plead with women to report to him what their men did” (102). His question is “why [do] your men hate me?” (102). Pancras is using women to spy on his political opponents who are male. This perspective raises issues of divisions among the nationalists, which if examined from another angle, is a replay of the idea of the male Sanyan as a normative threat to Pancras, the nationalist, just as all Sanyan men are to the colonialists. Pancras sees men as his enemies while women are looked on as innocent and his sanctuary because they do not have political ambitions in this period: “The thing is, I am not the only person who wants MLO skippership” (57), he explains to his uncle. It is the male Sanyans who are competing for the skippership.

The relationship between the female artistes and Pancras is asymmetrical both in the sense of the patron-client relationship as advanced above and in the fact that the songs and dances

exalt Pancras. The active nationalist grammar, as Boehmer notes, is conferred on the male such that Pancras is occasionally referred to as the “beloved father of the party” (57), a “messiah” sent “from London” (57), and a “martyr” (74). Such a masculinist description of Pancras is contrasted with the way the *Chioda* dancers and all Sanyan women are described: “They are the most beautiful of God’s creatures” (103). He likens them to “pearls” and states “I were to export them to some of our neighbours, whose women are just masks, Sanya would get a lot of foreign exchange” (107). Once again, the nationalist grammar points to the gendered and sexualized nationalist labour where women are assessed in terms of beauty and considered as objects for revenue.

Pancras’s obsession with heroic status forces him to collude with the British government to stage a fake arrest and secure fake imprisonment through what the narrator calls the “send-me-to-jail” political antics. Upon returning from his fake imprisonment, he demands that the party recognizes that honour and bestow upon him a Prison Graduate (PG) title²⁷ – “the first MLO PG” (75). Pancras’ ambition to get the ‘PG’ title is representative of the many and similar instances that happened in Africa during that period. In response to Pancras’ graduation, a Ghanaian newspaper has this as a lead title: “Another Son of Africa has graduated in a Sanyan Prison” (75). The PG title emphasizes the heroism and masculinisation of the nationalist struggles which also characterized African politics during that period. In her examination of praise songs in the context of anticolonial struggle in Malawi, Ruth Finnegan notes how women expressed their pride in either their prison graduate husbands or husbands languishing in prison due to their involvement in nationalist politics. One of the songs (quoted in Finnegan 272) goes thus:

My husband is a man
He is away in Kanjedza²⁸
The men who are here
Are women like us

By achieving the PG title, Pancras becomes a real ‘man.’ That this was the trend in Africa, is the point the narrator is raising here. This love of masculinised symbols of martyrdom is only possible through the support of women as agentic political participants:

²⁷ Judith Listowel’s *The Making of Tanganyika* includes a letter by Julius Nyerere to Sir Richard Turnbull, the then governor of British Tanganyika. In this letter, Nyerere writes about his misgivings for Tanganyika attaining independence without him adding the letters ‘P.G’ after his name and he notes that Turnbull “must accept the blame for that” (424-425).

²⁸ A notorious prison and detention camp in colonial Malawi.

In fact, in Sanya, he was virtually every good thing you knew! If by chance, you overheard people talk about Christian number one, then they meant Pancras! The MLO leader owned number one position in many things. Among these, he was number one sheikh, number one pagan, number one worker and number one farmer. Even the MLO Women's league of Sanya claimed that Pancras was their number one member! (53)

By praising him, the dancers have symbolically legitimated and accepted Pancras' authority and reinforced social and political hierarchies as the quotation above indicates. To be the 'number one' in everything is a summary of Pancras' ambition. However, here Pancras is a victim of the narrator's sarcastic comment. Pancras has not achieved all these things and in practice they cannot be achieved. In portraying him in this light, the narrator participates in criticizing the glorification of nationalist leaders. As Skye McDonald argues, a sarcastic comment is a "form of ironic speech commonly used to convey implicit criticism with a particular victim as its target" (486). Pancras is a victim of authorial mockery here.

The patron-client relationship assumes that there is a particular kind of reciprocity between the male and female actors in the nationalist scenario. But since the depicted party and nationalist hierarchy correspond directly to the general disparities between men and women, it may be useful to examine the kind of exchanges that exist here. What does the woman get by 'dancing politically'? In this theory, Scott claims that the client's best option is to reciprocate by offering a service that the patron needs badly. Dancing politically is the service that is given to the nationalist and the success of Pancras' rallies depends on these dancers. But what rewards do the dancers get in turn? Here, their labour in the struggle is enmeshed with economic benefits as the narrator testifies: "But the Sanyan women's 'love' for Pancras was largely an economic issue! Once a woman joined the love-Pancras-squads, she became assured of a lot of money and privileges" (102). In exchange for their services, women get economic rewards and other privileges which then underscore the patron-client relationship that Scott theorises about. Secondly, the dance by women seems to be one of the only alternatives for them to claim mobility up the pyramid of party leadership. Through dancing politically, the dancers finally manage to climb the political ladder in Sanya not as individuals, but as a group of women— the "love-Pancras-female-Squad" as the narrator calls it, or as the Party's women's wing. But as I noted above, there is power in the performance, which performers may exploit by composing coded songs with veiled messages. In other words, the praise function may be successfully merged with the social commentary function

where the performers can choose to be critical, not only of colonialism, but of patriarchy as well.

Looking at the plot of the novel and the symbols used, we notice that the narrative is mainly about Pancras as the maker of Sanyan anticolonial struggles. However, careful analysis indicates that the novel is heteroglossic as there are many instances to suggest that the struggle and characters partake in different dialogues against Pancras. When Pancras goes to visit his village, for example, he is faced with the dialogue from the villagers, much to his disadvantage. His uncle, apparently unhappy with his leadership, resorts to the use of folktale to teach him lessons. Through the 'Mnumeyeka' tale, Makaidi critiques the idea that privileges the man as the maker and performer of nationalist duty. Through this tale, Pancras' uncle makes a point that however strong, charismatic and impregnable a man may be, he still needs others, especially when he aims to found a nation. The highlight of the tale is simple: Mnumeyeka is a young and ambitious ruler of the Makonde people of Southern Tanzania. According to the narrator, "Mnumeyeka" means "the only man" (57). Arrogantly and singlehandedly, Mnumeyeka sets out to conquer his neighbouring clans and, despite advice against doing it singlehandedly, he proceeds until he reaches King Yelula's clan. King Yelula is the most ruthless and dangerous of all the kings; yet Mnumeyeka believes that he can defeat him singlehandedly. It is only by sheer providence that Mnumeyeka manages to escape from death; weak and thin, never to be his own self again. He "came to know that he was not the only 'crowing cock' he thought he was [...] he learnt to respect his neighbours" (63).

The gist of the tale appears simple, but its connection to the plot and the nationalist agenda is significant. Upon being asked about the moral of the story, Pancras' responses oscillate between the essences of power sharing, collective action, unity, but more importantly, that "no individual has the power, ability and intelligence above all the people" (63). Applied to the reading of the whole Sanyan nationalism, the moral of the tale suggests that nationalist struggle is not to be seen as an individual assignment or accomplishment. It is supposed to be a collective effort. It is this arrogance that results in Mnumeyeka, and by implication Pancras, failing to make their dreams a reality.

The representation of women's dance groups and praise performances as one of the forms of gendered labour through which ordinary women participate in anticolonial politics indicates that we can use the same performances as an entry point in examining ordinary women as one of the marginalized groups in Sanyan nationalist politics. It yields insights into the intersections between male and female and between gender and class and indicates how these

are played out in the nationalist arena. Looked at from the context of the 1950s, the novel's depiction of the existence of patriarchal systems (both traditional and colonial) produces the gendering of anticolonial party politics in which men occupy top leadership. The implication is that women are made to play supporting and legitimating roles. This representation of women as 'political resources' used to achieve certain political ends is Makaidi's way of representing the complex and interacting gendered roles of women and men in the struggle for independence. In the next section I turn my attention to the ordinary woman who forces her way into the nationalist political public, a theme that is central to Shafi's *Vuta n'kuvute*.

Anticolonial Nationalism and the Ordinary Woman in *Vuta n'kuvute*

The blurb of *Vuta n'kuvute* describes the central themes as romantic love and political revolution. These two features define a nationalist romance. The usual motif in a nationalist romance is that of lovers struggling to challenge existing social or political divisions in a society and opening up a possibility for reconciliation among the social or political groups. According to Doris Sommer, the nationalist romance is a "pacifying project" (29), serving the nation through a fantasy of reconciliation. Set in the 1950s against a backdrop of Islamic, colonial and Indian influences in Zanzibar, the novel is a straightforward account of the life of Yasmin, an Indian and Denge, a Swahili. Yasmin is married off to fifty-five-year old Raza at the tender age of fifteen. Raza, an Indian *dukawallah*, is portrayed as an old-timer, mean, dirty and a detestable husband. Yasmin detests him and she would rather die than give her body to this old man. Laura Fair indicates that the practice of elders choosing spouses for their children and the interest in financially well-off and older men was common in colonial Zanzibar. Cloistered in the home due to *pardah*, Yasmin's life is filled with desolation and cravings. Determined to be free, she runs away, only to be disowned by her parents for embarrassing them and the whole Indian community. She has committed an honour crime just like Isamba in *Kwaheri* who flees with Matumula, her lover, as discussed in chapter two. She finds refuge in the ramshackle room of Mwajuma, the only girl she knew as their regular customer at the shop. Here, she experiences a freer and more relaxed life and, more importantly, falls in love with Denge, a western-educated Swahili man and a leader of an anticolonial movement. She stands charged by her parents for running away from her Indian

husband; staying with Mwajuma, a Swahili woman in *Uswahilini*²⁹; loving Denge, a Swahili man; and supporting the cause of the Swahilis, the anticolonial struggles.

Because of the way the novel merges individual growth and the nationalist impulse, I approach it as a bildungsroman and a nationalist romance. I trace Yasmin's journey and her attempts to escape from suffocating married life to her public involvement in the anticolonial struggle. Focusing on the surprises, risks, losses, and challenges entailed in this journey, I point to the porosity of the public sphere while demonstrating how this sphere poses different challenges to Yasmin and other female characters. I posit that unlike the women in *The Serpent-Hearted Politician*, Yasmin and Mwajuma are actively engaged in the struggle for independence and this is a result of their awareness of the need to take part in it. I note that *purdah* and the general husband-wife relations between Raza and Yasmin on the one hand, and the daughter-parent relationship between Yasmin and her parents on the other, are symbolic of the colonizer-colonized relations and they project colonialism as operating at a micro and familial level. This way, anti-patriarchy and anti-colonialism become two sides of the same coin. Yasmin's movement from the *purdah* enclosures to the public entail challenging both the micro and macro forms of oppression. Although she can individually challenge the micro form, the macro one (which is the public) is an entirely new sphere for her. Here Yasmin needs special orientation from Denge, a 'normative' male nationalist and her lover. In this case, love becomes a pervasive symbol, implying that love is a romantic attachment to an individual and an individual's love to a nation.

Through the impetus of nationalist romance, Yasmin expresses her agency and the need to reconcile antagonistic racial and class relations on the island. Her love relationship with Denge and her marriage with Bukhet at the end of the novel have political implications. Through the marriage, in particular and its reconciliatory tone, Shafi indicates that independence struggle without internal ethnic and racial reconciliation is a useless endeavour. Although Yasmin and other women continue to be portrayed in supportive roles to the male nationalists, all of them have political or nationalist significance. It is their awareness that they are contributing to the nationalist cause that distinguishes them from the women in *The Serpent-Hearted Politician*. Through Yasmin and Mwajuma, for example, femininity does not emerge as an obstacle; rather it emerges as an opportunity that enhances their participation in

²⁹ Swahili word for 'area for the Swahili people'. A *Mswahili* is Shafi's term for a black man thus the use of Swahili man or woman in my analysis of the novel. *Uswahilini* is derogatorily used to refer to an area where poor people live. *Uhindini* and *Uzunguni* signify affluent areas where Indians and Europeans live respectively.

a masculinised sphere without necessarily becoming masculinised. They do so by deliberately over-displaying their feminine traits which they use as a way to participate in a ‘man’s sphere.’ This mentality is a disguise to suggest that they are simply ‘women’ and therefore harmless to the colonial administration. However, deep inside, they are as ‘masculine’ and disastrous to the colonial authority as their male counterparts even though in the eyes of the colonial government they are seen as harmless.

Yasmin’s personal growth and her political evolution in the way she relates with the nation and the male characters are central elements in the narrative. A bildungsroman is a “novel of self-discovery,” as Rita Felski puts it. This discovery, as Abel et al argue, is “cumulative, gradual, total [...] with its belief in human perfectibility and historical growth [...] assuming the possibility of individual achievement and social integration” (5). In this novel, like in most bildungsromane, the first step is the character’s self-evaluation and evaluation of her society. Yasmin’s self-evaluation occurs against a background of racial, religious, class, patriarchal, as well as colonial oppression. This re-evaluation is a result of the clash between her inner self and the expectations imposed by her society. One of these expectations is the institution of *purdah*. According to White, the logic behind *purdah* is that of “the male being self-reliant and aggressive, the female weak and irresponsible, and in need of protection” (31). In his interview with Fair, Shafi notes that his aim is

[T]o locate the novel in Zanzibar and describe her life because I wanted to describe how life was in Zanzibar at this time. Young people were taught to respect the elders, and girls their husbands, and never to question them. In the 1950s there were many cases of old men like Raza marrying young girls like Yasmin [and subjecting them to *purdah*]. (qtd. in Fair 78)

However, he firmly refuses to link Yasmin’s struggle against the cultural constrictions enforced through practices like *purdah* with the struggle for independence: “I just wanted to describe what life was and not necessarily to link it with a dual nationalism” (ibid 78).³⁰ As a feminist, Fair argues that there is an obvious link between Yasmin’s personal struggle and the anticolonial struggle. Fair does not, however, show this link, but rather states it as a matter of fact that the nationalist movement of the 1950s “framed the lives of nearly everyone who lived in the isles” by redefining issues such as “arranged marriage, communal integrity [...] cross-class and interracial sex [and] forced marriage” (77). Elsewhere, Flavia Aiello Traore

³⁰ See also Lutz Diegner “Mazungumzo na Adam Shafi” (2011) where, Shafi repeats this view.

observes that the central theme is “the love for *uhuru*, for freedom and independence, at various levels, individual, social and political” (36) whereas Magdalena Wafulwa sees the novel as detailing generational conflicts and tensions between modernity and tradition.

At this point it is useful to recall that Roland Barthes warns us against committing the intentional fallacy. While I credit Shafi for indicating the seamy side of *pardah* and arranged marriages, I do read Yasmin’s unhappy life with Raza as a necessary incentive for her to come out and eventually partake in challenging colonialism. Raza fits the stereotype of the *dukawallah* that is extensively represented in East African fiction (as indicated in chapter three). Yasmin herself describes him as dirty, mean and stingy; always more concerned with his businesses than his relations with people. Raza, she believes, is like a colonizer, overworking her like a *mtumishi*, a servant, both during the day and at night. Her escape from Raza to Uswahilini indicates that she has moved from one world to another, the former being affluent but restrictive while the latter is poor but free. Yasmin’s decision is difficult because she chooses poverty with freedom at the expense of affluence with miseries. By finding the public space enjoyable and free, at the expense of honour and respectability in the private sphere, she challenges the very principles upon which *pardah* is based. Comparing Yasmin’s refusal to heed the practice of *pardah* and Mashavu’s interest in the same in *Kuli* (discussed in chapter three), one is left to wonder what exactly accounts for the differences in behaviour of the two characters. One of the reasons could be generational differences. Whereas Mashavu in *Kuli* represents the older generation in colonial Zanzibar, Yasmin represents the younger generation in the last decade of colonialism in Zanzibar.

The fact that the furthest that Yasmin can go out was to the shop counter in Raza’s shop indicates also the limited interaction that she had with the outside world. Unlike her limited interaction with the society at the counter in the shop, in the same way as the wife of Charan in *The Gathering Storm*, she realises that in Mwajuma’s single and ramshackle room, she is able to interact with and even partake in the life of the society that seemed so distant from her. In Mwajuma’s home, as another contact space, Yasmin is able to interact with society. Her contact with Denge in Mwajuma’s house marks the beginning of both their love and political relationship. Unlike Pancras, Denge is to shoulder the responsibility of orientating the two young women about the anticolonial struggles that he is waging. Their relationship is therefore punctuated with lectures, thus:

Sikiliza sista, hawa wakoloni na vijibwa vyao ni watu wapumbavu kabisa, kwao kila mtu ni koministi. Ukidai haki yako wewe koministi. Ukisema

ukweli wewe koministi. Ukipinga kutawaliwa wewe koministi. Mau Mau wa Kenya wameitwa makoministi, wapigania uhuru wa Algeria wameitwa makomunisti. Kila anayedai haki kwao ni koministi. (68)

[Listen to me, my sister! These colonialists and their accomplices are very stupid people. To them every one of us is a communist. If you stand for your right, you are a communist. If you tell them the truth, you are a communist. If you ask for independence, you are a communist. Mau Mau fighters have been dubbed communists; Algerian freedom fighters have also been called the same. Anyone who fights for his right is a communist.]

There are many moments like this in the early phase of their love relationship through which Denge manages to have both Yasmin and Mwajuma understand the meaning of the struggle including its vocabulary such as the word ‘koministi’, which Mwajuma confuses with *msaliti* (Swahili for traitor). At this point then, Yasmin has moved a step in her growth. By choosing to stay with the poor Swahilis, becoming a lover to a Swahili, and by supporting the black man’s cause – the anticolonial movement. Yasmin challenges the racial and political expectations of the Indians in colonial Zanzibar. Through such orientations by Denge, she is slowly carving her way deep into the nationalist struggle. But how does Yasmin find Denge’s nationalist struggles as articulating her own struggles? How does she connect the miseries she suffered at the hands of her parents and Raza with colonialism? And how is her challenge to patriarchy, a blow to colonialism?

When Shafi rejects the link between Yasmin’s antipatriarchal behaviour and colonial struggle, he wrongly assumes that patriarchy belongs to one sphere – the private, while colonialism belongs to another sphere – the public. A close reading of the novel, however, indicates that not only are the two spheres intertwined, but they also interact with each other in the narrative of the novel. First, the fascination of the parents of Yasmin with the racial divide and the insistence that she marries one of their own people on the one hand, and Raza’s obsession with *pardah* on the other, are all part of their struggles to elevate themselves into a better position in the colonized community in which class and race are important variables. Related to this is the link between colonial enforcement of the gendering of the public and private sphere and Raza’s commitment to ‘domesticating’ Yasmin – the construction of the home as a private and feminine sphere, according to Boehmer. The analogy between colonialism and patriarchy in the novel is so evident that challenging patriarchy, as Yasmin does, is simultaneously a challenge to colonialism. The reverse is also true: one cannot envision a

struggle against colonialism without necessarily challenging patriarchy. In the same way, the patriarchy-colonialism analogy portrays Yasmin's parents and Raza as effective agents of colonialism through their display of both elaborate and subtle patriarchal power over Yasmin. As such, patriarchy becomes an expression of colonialism at the level of the family.

The patriarchy-colonialism analogy is further reflected by Yasmin's challenge to class hostilities in Zanzibar. In the novel, this is looked at as a nationalist romance. According to the depicted racial stereotype, the Indians in Zanzibar do not support the nationalist struggle because they are pessimistic about the ability of the black man to rule and "dismiss nationalist ambitions with the question 'How will he get ability to rule'" (Brennan 175). In view of this, Yasmin has gone far in committing an honour crime against her people. Her transgression is not only to relate with the Swahilis, the *golos*³¹ as her mother calls them, but even her very act of supporting the struggle is the opposite of how many *ponjoros*³², conceived of the struggle.³³ Through the analogy, Shafi aims to question this, and Yasmin challenges it thus: "Iko wapi heshima ya binadamu ikiwa Muhindi anamwita Mswahili golo na Mswahili naye anamwita Muhindi ponjoro?" (254). [Where is human dignity, if an Indian and an African call each other *golo* and *ponjoro* respectively?].

One of the ways in which Shafi attempts to represent this challenge is through a careful deployment of the narrative voices and the adoption of 'love-conquers-all' narrative approach where the relationship between Denge and Yasmin becomes an emblem for nationalist struggle which challenges such relations. In their theory of narratives, Katie Wales and Jahn Manfred observe that a narrative voice can take three forms: implied author (omniscient narrator), character narrator, or a combination of both. The implied author's stance regarding the *golo-ponjoro* divide is that he is against racial discrimination which both Yasmin and Denge are fighting: "Kwa waswahili Yasmin alikuwa ni mfano wa jinsi gani watu wa makabila mbalimbali wanaweza kuwa pamoja" (85). [To the Africans, Yasmin was a good example of how people from different ethnic groups could be united and stay together]. This voice is corroborated by Yasmin's focalization which is a result of her experience living among the Swahilis: "Mtu ni mtu. Hakuna mtu mtu, na mtu kinyaa, kwangu wote ni watu, ni viumbe walioumbwa na Mungu" (248) [A human being is a human being. There is nothing

³¹ 'Golo' is a Gujarati word for 'slave', "a people destined for the conditions of slavery for all times" (Brennan 125)

³² In the Tanzanian nationalist political vocabulary, all the Indians were commonly referred to as the *ponjoros*, which means 'exploiters'.

³³ The Swahili use *golo* while the Indians use *ponjoro* to respectively denigrate and stigmatise each other.

like a real human being and an unworthy human being. They are all human beings – God’s creations].

If the Denge-Yasmin love relationship is an important milestone in the racial and political struggles that the two characters champion, it is the relationship between the implied author and Yasmin that challenges the *golo-ponjoro* hierarchies. When Denge allows Yasmin to marry another man because of his restlessness and constant running from the colonial government, Yasmin achieves another social step which is linked with the political sphere and nationalist politics of the island. She chooses to marry Bukhet, another Swahili young man. Yasmin has evolved to another level where she has the right to choose a marriage partner, something that is entirely difficult in the Indian circles. She does not need to ask for permission from her parents because she has chosen to be a free ‘outcast.’ Bukhet must seek permission from his uncle, who is hesitant because of the *ponjoro-golo* divide. His family questions this relationship thus: how can Bukhet, a *golo*, marry an Indian girl, a *ponjoro* while there are thousands and thousands of Swahili girls waiting for men? Bukhet challenges his uncle to prove Yasmin’s *ponjoriness*, for Yasmin has demonstrated that she is not a *ponjoro*.

In his interview with Lutz Diegner, Shafi insists that he uses Yasmin to show that racial hostilities can be put aside. He insists that there is also a gender issue in that, as far as interracial marriages are concerned, it is easier for a male Indian to propose marriage to a Swahili woman than for a male Swahili to propose the same to an Indian woman, thus the dilemma shown by Bukhet’s uncle. This is related to the notion of the woman as the marker of racial boundaries whose sexual choices are restricted by society, a theme that also appears in the novels set in colonial Tanzania as indicated in chapter three, where the Indian woman’s interaction with the people outside the family members is limited. However, while the woman in *The Gathering Storm* (discussed in chapter three) is more racist than her male counterparts, Yasmin challenges the stereotype.

However, the success of these young men and women must be measured also by evaluating their impact on the attitudes of their parents and the older generation. As a love-conquers-all narrative, the drama concludes with the marriage between Yasmin and Bukhet and the wedding ceremony acts as a symbol of reconciliation for the two antagonistic races where *ponjoroism* and *goloism* are denounced. This optimism is captured again by the implied author on the wedding day where not only is Bashiri (Bukhet’s uncle) part of the ceremony, but even Gulam (Yasmin’s uncle) is in attendance, representing her mother who can not make it because she is homebound due to sickness: “Arusi ilikuwa ya kukata na shoka [...] Gulam

naye alisahau Uhindi wake [...] *Ugolo na Uponjoro ukaisha*" (275). [The wedding was wonderful. Gulam put aside his Indianness. *Goloism* and *Ponjoroism* disappeared.]

Captured in this incident is the representation of the protagonist's optimism concerning the future society where personal will, and not one's ethnic, racial filiation or power of birth, will be key in defining one's destiny. By marrying Bukhet, Yasmin challenges her duty as a boundary-marker of the Asian community in Zanzibar. Such inter-racial marriages and inter-racial sexual relationships offer one of the best ways of examining the ordinary woman's relationship to the nation. Yasmin's pro-active gesture in forming these relationships not only points to the woman's own definition of how to contribute to the nationalist cause but she also becomes a symbol of pacification; bringing together two antagonistic races and classes, and thus opening up new relations. Unlike Pancras in *The Serpent-Hearted Politician* who determines the terms and conditions of how women participate in the nationalist sphere, Denge and Yasmin, and later, Yasmin and Bukhet, relate in a way that suggests that compulsion or master-subordinate relationships do not define a couple's relationship. She defines her own terms of engagement.

Yasmin's life in Uswahilini and her love of and marriage relationship with a Swahili man and her commitment to the anticolonial struggle challenge the idea of Yasmin as the 'other' of the Swahilis. She acknowledges that

Sasa sina mwingine ila mimi na Waafrika, nd'o ndugu zangu, baba zangu, nd'o mama zangu, nd'o shoga zangu. Na wanawadharau kwa sababu gani hasa? Wao si watu? (43)

[I have no one to turn to except to the Africans. They are my relatives, my fathers, my mothers, my friends. Why do they despise them? Are they not human beings?]

If Bukhet has challenged his uncle to prove Yasmin's *ponjoriness* because he does not see any *ponjoriness* in her, Yasmin, in the foregoing quote, poses the same question: Are the *golos* not human beings? Having lived with them, Yasmin sees *goloism* simply as a construct that is only skin-deep. Her stay with Mwajuma and her interaction with other Swahilis have taught her that a worthy Swahili is like any other good human being— humane and reliable. This becomes one of the strongest perspectives of the novel that directly links the nationalist romance and the struggle for independence which also includes fighting racism.

Yasmin's meeting with Denge is a turning point in her life because not only does Denge meet her definition of a true and romantic love that she has been craving while staying with Raza, but he is also her teacher in politics and nationalism. This contrasts with Pancras in *The Serpent Hearted Politician*, who sees women as passive vehicles for fulfilling his personal political ambitions. While Denge inspires Yasmin and Mwajuma, Pancras manipulates 'his' women. The bond between Yasmin and Denge is not based on patriarchal ties like that in her relationship with Raza, nor is it manipulative like that displayed by Pancras. It is not a patron-client relationship; it is one where Yasmin contributes more than she is expected to as a woman and in a patriarchal society. By arguing that her contribution to the struggle is exemplary, the image of a tug-of-war game that is encapsulated in the title does not only apply to Denge and his relationship with the colonial government, it also forms one of the significant displays of Yasmin's commitment to the movement. Yasmin's tug-of-war game is such that her ego is oscillating between supporting Denge and the colonial secret agents, the latter having blackmailed her. The second challenge is how to master the antics of the trade – the nationalist vocabularies and strategies so that she matches her lover's level of political sophistication. Moreover, the importance of putting the national interest first, not love, is another challenge. Once again, it is the love relationship turned into a student-teacher relationship that eventually elevates her commitment:

Yasmin mimi najua unanipenda, na mimi nakupenda vile vile, lakini kuna kitu kimoja napenda uelewe, Kuna mapenzi na wajibu wa mtu kwa jamii [...] kila mtu ana wajibu fulani katika jamii...kuona kwamba nchi hii inakuwa huru...hii ni kazi ngumu, ina matatizo mengi na inahitaji kujitoka mhangana. (145)

[Yasmin, I know that you love me. In the same way, I love you. But there is one thing you must understand: There is love and one's responsibility to their society. Every one of us has responsibility to their society in one way or another. Fighting for the freedom of this country is one of these responsibilities. It is a hard and challenging responsibility. Individual sacrifice is key!].

In the foregoing quotation, the first point that Denge raises is that love must be seen as a luxury during the struggle. He also notes that fighting for independence is the responsibility of all Zanzibaris and that it involves a lot of sacrifices. In other words, Denge loves Yasmin as much as she loves him, but their duties to their nation must come first. In the end Yasmin's

relationship with Denge becomes purely political to the extent that Denge allows her to take another husband, Bukhet.

One troubling fact of the portrayal of the struggle in this text is the society's gendered investment in men and women as nationalist subjects. Denge, like Pancras, is a western-educated person and a fully-oriented political actor. With five years of training in Russia and his exposure to the outside world, how can Denge be compared with Yasmin whose only opportunity to learn comes after she runs away from *purdah*? When Yasmin and Mwajuma are made to perform a sensitive task of gathering intelligence, and when their room, lifestyles, and movements are all monitored by the secret agents, they find themselves involved in a war in which they are not trained to participate. Ironically, it is the same women who outperform the police by intelligently supplying them with false information and making them miss their targets. This is similar to the labour of women in *The Serpent-Hearted Politician* where Pancras uses them to spy on their husbands. The difference here is that Pancras uses them to fight his political opponents who are fellow nationalists while Denge uses Yasmin and Mwajuma to gather information that would help fight colonialism. This must be seen as a growth or journey because what begins as mere support for Denge, simply because the colonial government is at war with him, matures into full commitment to national liberation. In the same way, what begins as a brother-sister relationship between Denge and Mwajuma equally matures into the latter's involvement in the nationalist movement. Therefore, it is through the teacher-learner relationship between Denge and the two girls that the latter learn to take part in the struggle and evolve from ignorance to understanding the 'whys' and 'hows' of the anticolonial struggle that is waged.

The risks which Yasmin and Mwajuma face as a result of their involvement in the anticolonial politics abound. How can beautiful, jobless and illiterate women play safe in a sphere that is sophisticatedly 'masculinised' without necessarily losing respectability? They are dubbed *bibi malaya*, prostitute women – a general stigma that even early female nationalists were exposed to, as Geiger indicates.³⁴ This is one of the many surprising costs the two women must pay for frequenting the public. By dubbing them prostitutes, does the colonial authority want to discipline them or contain them and therefore prevent them from participating in the political public? Further, by being seen as morally loose, is the community punishing them for transgressing the patriarchal traditions that expects them to be confined to the domestic

³⁴ Some of the prominent Tanzanian female politicians interviewed by Geiger mention their husbands' reluctance to allow them to participate in nationalist politics. They observe that their marriages with their husbands did not last long because they could not live like full-time (and ideal) wives in the fifties.

sphere? What the colonial authority and the society's denigration of the women fail to capture is the fact that what these women are doing is a form of labour, whether real or faked and this is their contribution to the struggle.

The tagging of the two girls as prostitutes; the use of the same moral label for prominent female politicians in Tanzania's nationalist period; the deployment of Rose to help Pancras pass the first night in *The Serpent-Hearted Politician*; and Selina's recruitment of girls for Udomo and Mhendi in *A Wreath for Udomo* relate to the mobilization of women as sexual labourers in African nationalist struggles as a motif. The reference to the girls as prostitutes also points to the society's notion of respectability and is used in this context as a socio-political marker of a deviant and unrespectable woman for simply daring to move into spaces wrongly considered to be male territory. This way, *Vuta n'kuvute* and *The Serpent Hearted Politician* form a continuum in depicting the gendered labour of women in nationalist contexts. Either the woman is deployed as a sex object by the patriarchal nationalist elites as in *The Serpent Hearted Politician* or kept in the domestic sphere like Yasmin in *Vuta n'kuvute*. The latter is considered more respectable for the woman because of the racial, classed and religious cultural dispensation among the Zanzibaris in *Vuta n'kuvute*. Yasmin's defiance of patriarchal expectations and her political activism mean that she is considered loose and therefore not respectable. This is contrasted with the depiction of the houseboys in chapter three. While Yasmin loses respectability because she frequents the public, the houseboys lose respectability for going private – by working as domestic servants. However, unlike Yasmin and Mwajuma in *Vuta n'kuvute*, the houseboys compensate for their lost respectability or masculinity by displaying hyper-masculinity in their homes. Unfortunately, Yasmin and Mwajuma have to live with the inferred tag of prostitute.

In explaining why the girls' transgressive behaviour acquires sexual connotations, societal socialisation seems to inform the thinking of the characters including the colonial authority represented by Inspector Wright. The society portrayed by Shafi is one in which the private and the public spheres are synonyms for a woman and a man respectively and define respectable femininity and masculinity. The definition of a good woman as one who is home-bound means that participating in the society's public life is living on the margins of socially acceptable norms and definition of a good woman. What this also means is that the woman in question is beyond the control of men for it is only marriage and therefore home that subjects her to male control. The closest tag to this behaviour as Shafi indicates is to refer to these women as prostitutes connotating 'free' but morally loose women. In other words, the

depicted society's dilemma at this time is: since when do women take part in active nationalist politics? The society's ideology of gender relations captured here suggests that even when women have an opportunity to take part in nationalist politics, they should not lest they are considered to be falling outside or on the margins of acceptable and respectable definition of a good Tanzanian woman at the time. It is in this light that the label "prostitute" is deployed to articulate social and political sanction against women in much the same way as it helps solidify patriarchal inequalities. This portrayal is comparable to the situation in Zimbabwe as Chipso Hungwe has noted: the term prostitute "does not only refer to women who sell sexual services, but is used broadly to insult and censure any woman who is physically located beyond male control or who is behaving in ways that men disapprove of" (42).

Yet it is essential to see this name-calling as only a risk involved in any journey. Such risks are part and parcel of nationalist romance and bildungsroman novels. The journey of self-determination is never a smooth one because it "does not proceed gradually from stage to stage; sometimes it regresses, resulting in either the physical death or psychological destruction – as a result of conformity to society's expectations" (Lugano 11). The question here is, how do they seek to make use of it? I do not intend to condone Inspector Wright's reference to these women as cheap prostitutes, nor is there anything to suggest that they are prostitutes, let alone cheap. This is a stereotype that needs to be challenged and the novel does that successfully by portraying Inspector Wright's pleasure in denigrating these women simply because they associate themselves with the male nationalists. Like the men in *Myombekere* and *Kwaheri* in pre-colonial society (discussed in chapter one), Yasmin and Mwajuma are also experiencing courtesy stigma, the stigma they get by associating themselves with male nationalists and partaking in public life. Even if they were prostitutes, I believe, they can still contribute to the nationalist cause in their capacity as prostitutes. For example, Enloe's *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* demonstrates how prostitutes and brothels are important elements for international capitalism and international relations. She argues that the presence of brothels near military bases, mines, plantations and other places where capitalists invest, demonstrates that women contribute to international relations and the spread of capitalism. It would be wrong to assume that they cannot do the same in the nationalist scenario. Elsewhere in African literature, Senkoro in *The Prostitute in African Literature* eloquently demonstrates this view. Some of the prostitutes he examines include Jagua Nana in Cyprian Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana* (1961), Shida in Ndyanao Balisidya's *Shida* ³⁵ and Penda in

³⁵ Swahili word for 'hardship'.

Ousmane Sembene's *God's Bits of Wood* (1960). These may be seen as protesting against both their individual miseries and the overall socio-cultural and political system. He notes that "the prostitute is portrayed as a fighter who participates physically in the struggle of the workers and peasants" (70). In a similar way, Luise White sees prostitutes in colonial Kenya as a form of family labour. We can therefore see Yasmin and Mwajuma's prostitution (even though faked) as a form of nationalist labour.

On several occasions, the two girls appropriate this tag of prostitution. They envelope themselves in postures that suggest they are either loose or easy-going yet harmless girls but deep inside they are both morally upright and committed to the struggle. This is a strategy to outwit colonial secret agents, police officers and prison wardens. This masquerade of femininity indicates the agency on the part of the woman and her ability to negotiate her way in a predominantly male sphere according to her own terms. Through such camouflages, the women get the colonial authority to see them as 'prostitutes' and as posing no threat to the nationalist battlefield even when at the frontline. White offers useful insights on this angle especially regarding the role of prostitute in colonial Kenya, where for reasons of political expediency, they were allowed legitimacy by their communities as long as they managed to trap African soldiers who defended the interests of the colonialists, murdering such collaborators or stealing their guns.

Wambui Otieno's autobiography *Mau Mau's Daughter* also documents the recruitment of sex workers and using them to steal information and guns from colonial officers for the Mau Mau movement in Kenya. Likewise, Yasmin and Mwajuma masquerade as good-time women. This resonates with Scott's theory of hidden transcripts where subordinates disguise their insubordination by resorting to techniques of deception. As Scott observes, such techniques "make no headlines" (36). Through this approach, we can see how these women and Denge and his group appear to use the colonial perception of women as a sanctuary, safety and security strategy while facilitating their participation in the struggle. This is further illustrated when Mwajuma tells Denge that she has been recruited by the colonial government to report on him and his activities. In this case, Denge appropriates the same colonial perception of these girls to advise Mwajuma what she should report back to the agent:

Huyo kachero atakapokuja tena mwambiye kwamba kinachonileta hapa kwako ni Yasmin tu [...] Mwambie kuwa mimi sishughuliki na chochote ila wanawake tu [...] kwamba hata huko Urusi nimeshindwa masomo kwa sababu ya kupenda makoo. (68)

[When the agent comes again, tell him that Yasmin is the reason why I frequent your house. Tell him also that I find pleasure in womanizing. I do not have any other serious business, that I even failed my studies in Russia because of prostitutes.]

This view means that the use of the female and her body offers a form of ‘protection’ for Denge and other male colleagues, just as it enables feigned political innocence on the part of the girls. Both the appropriation of the colonial perception of women and the pornographic way of looking at the girls by the colonialists, erode the power of the ‘onlookers’ who are the colonial agents, and reinforces the power and security of the denigrated and the ‘object’ – the girls and those who work with them like Denge.

The colonial dismissal of these girls as cheap prostitutes resonates with the androcentric theory of nationalism which emphasizes the active/passive, central/marginal, and violent/non-violent dichotomies where the man is seen as active, central and violent whereas the woman is seen as inactive, peripheral and meek. In the context of the novel, these dichotomies can be misleading because they operate on the assumption that if the participant is not at the frontline – firing guns; blacklisted like Denge; attacking symbols of colonial power; imprisoned or even emerging as a prison-graduate like Pancras; then one is not an active participant. Shafi deconstructs these dichotomies and argues that they operate in the minds of the colonial authority. To them, these girls neither pose any serious threat to the government nor are they part of the movement. The possibility is there, Shafi shows, for women to subversively appropriate this thinking and facilitate their smooth participation in the nationalist struggle.

Yasmin’s entry into the nationalist scenario owes a lot to what Ohly refers to as the ‘stimulus-response’ technique of narration. This narrative technique focuses on the narration of events and the character’s reaction to them. In the context of the novel, the stimulus is patriarchy in the private sphere. Through the reading of Yasmin’s inner life, I am able to know why she responds to patriarchy and other stimuli the way she does. Her losses as a wife of Raza are directly linked with colonialism on the one hand and her defiance against patriarchal arrangements entails joining forces with the anticolonial struggle on the other. It is through such understanding that we can see her entry into the political public and nationalist movement as simply an extension of the same struggle. Patriarchy and colonialism and, by implication, antipatriarchy and anticolonialism are seen as two sides of the same coin.

Since the analysis indicates that Shafi exalts Yasmin as an ordinary woman who has contributed immensely to the nationalist cause, his success must also be examined in the way the male nationalists perceive her contribution and her position in a struggle. Is she perceived simply as an agentic participant or a sex object like the women in *The Serpent-Hearted Politician*? Not only does Yasmin graduate as a fully-committed nationalist, she is also appreciated by the males and placed at the same level as the male nationalists:

Yasmin, wewe wetu” [...] “Wewe mwenzetu Yasmin. Umeshatufanyia mengi katika kuendeleza matumaini yetu. Kumbuka jinsi ulivyoshiriki [...] Kumbuka jinsi ulivyotusaidia kuwababaisha polisi [...] Kumbuka hayo yote, pamoja na pendo lako kwa ndugu yetu Denge.” “Wewe ni mmoja wetu. Denge atatoka, tena tutamtoa sisi wenyewe. Mimi, wewe na wengine. (228)

[You are ours Yasmin. You are one of us. You have done a lot in keeping our hopes alive. Remember how you have participated. Remember how you helped in destabilizing the police intelligence. Remember all these and your love for our brother, Denge. You are one of us. You, I and others will jointly work to free him.]

This is the most appreciative remark indicating acknowledgement of the woman’s labour contribution to the nationalist cause in the novel. Mambo, the speaker in the foregoing quotation, is talking to Yasmin, whose boyfriend, the architect of the movement, Denge, is languishing in prison after being found guilty of unlawfully authoring and distributing illegal, propagandist newspapers. Mambo rates Yasmin’s contribution to the nationalist struggle as exemplary. She is one of them. This is an important aspect of the novel as it shows that Yasmin has managed to overcome cultural constrictions and constructions to the extent of forcing her way into a sphere that is considered to be for males. This forms one of the major feminist impulses of the novel.

Conclusion

In the depicted nationalist period, there is still a preponderance of traditional and colonial gendered perception of labour. The deployment of women in *The Serpent-Hearted Politician* as sex objects and the construing of Yasmin and Mwajuma as prostitutes in *Vuta n’kuvute* portray the nationalist struggles and battlefields as framed around the notions of women as sex objects. Yet when compared with the pre-colonial and colonial gender relations, the ones

in the nationalist period represent a new dawn. By appropriating this set of perceptions to undermine the colonial project, Yasmin and Mwajuma in *Vuta n'kuvute* offer an alternative to the case of Rose and Pancras exploited in *The Serpent-Hearted Politician*. Secondly, unlike Pancras who manipulates women and uses them to fight his own brothers, Denge uses women to undermine the colonial project. By carefully orientating the girls concerning colonial and anticolonial politics, Denge offers them an alternative perspective that challenges the one adopted by Pancras. This way, the novels are engaged in a conversation that not only produces a dominant discourse but also strives to offer an alternative one.

Common in the novels is the glaring depiction of women as 'hired' or 'invited' into the nationalist struggle. This means that to a great extent their labour is defined by the men. However, through Yasmin and Mwajuma, the analysis also reveals that women actively take part in modifying/improvising the roles given to them by men. Through them, Shafi successfully portrays the relationship between patriarchy and colonialism on the one hand, and antipatriarchy and anticolonialism on the other.

Chapter Five: From *Ujamaa* to Neoliberalism: Gender Relations in the Post-Independence Tanzania

Introduction

Sanya, a fictional British colony discussed in chapter four, is represented as having attained its political independence. However, the independence is a sham. That is, “you had the era of political struggle, and then came independence ceremony, before the country slid to pre-independence slavery” (92), the narrator in *The Serpent-Hearted Politician* claims. Asked to say how he felt days after the independence, one old man has this to say: “Well ... I went hungry on Independence Day and to-day, I woke-up more hungry!” (93). The post-independence socio-economic disillusionment is also captured in the last chapter of *The Gathering Storm*, a novel analysed in chapter three. For many characters the independence is equated to localisation of colonial rule. As a result, they are craving for “true *uhuru*” and “real revolution.” Their problem is that “the party had seized the country from the whites; but it had not delivered it to the rightful owner [...] had not fulfilled its task” (176).

Considering that economic disillusionment seems to be the central motif in the fiction that depicts the immediate post-independence Tanzania, it is important to examine the representation of governmental efforts to address the causes of characters’ disillusionment. In Tanzania, the post-independence government’s initiatives took a number of socio-economic shifts. This chapter focuses on the representation of two of major economic shifts during this period of Tanzania’s history: the adoption and implementation of *Ujamaa* from 1967 and the neoliberal economy in the early 1980s. Specifically, the chapter analyses the representation of shifts in gender relations as a result of these socio-economic orientations. Since *Ujamaa* appears as a pervasive theme in the fiction that focuses on the post-independence Tanzania period, and since the failure of *Ujamaa* is portrayed as the justification for the shift to a neoliberal economy, it is essential to analyse the two periods together in this chapter.

The first section examines the representation of gender relations against a background of the *Ujamaa* socio-economic dispensation. In examining gender representation during the *Ujamaa* period, the chapter uses Ruhumbika’s *Village in Uhuru* and Ndunguru’s *The Lion of Yola*. These novels focus on the representation of *Ujamaa* as a socio-economic development approach adopted after the failure of the first five-year economic developmental plan of 1964-1969. Implemented from 1967 onwards, the *Ujamaa* period represents a crisis period in the

history of the nation. First, it witnessed the failure of the second five-year development plan of 1969-1974. Second, the global oil crises in 1973 and 1979 had a serious impact on a young and poor national economy at this time. Third, the vagaries of nature were very harsh to Tanzania. The nation experienced successive droughts and famines in 1972, 1980, 1983 and 1984. Fourth, the Tanzania-Uganda war of 1978/79 further drained the young economy. The burden of self-reliance, the embracing of socialism during the Cold war, discontentment from the rural people,³⁶ and internal divisions within the party regarding some *Ujamaa*³⁷ policies are the other problems that placed a drag on the implementation of *Ujamaa*. All these kept on boiling underneath the surface until the early 1980s when it became clear that Tanzania's version of socialism had failed. The failure of *Ujamaa* led to the adoption of market economy policies.

With regard to the depiction of gender relations during the *Ujamaa* period, I argue that *Ujamaa* is portrayed as borrowing a lot from colonial-era gender policies and traditional gender hierarchies. The implication of this borrowing is contradictory. In some aspects it challenges existing gender inequalities while in others it supports existing inequalities and hierarchies. Secondly, although in theory *Ujamaa* advocated the equality of all human beings, in practice, it is portrayed mainly as an economic project with very little investment in promoting gender equality.

In examining the mismatch between *Ujamaa* theory³⁸ and practice, I use Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia to argue for the existence and co-existence of different varieties of language in the texts and the tensions and dialogues within them. Such dialogues help authors and /or characters to interpret and re-interpret the state's version of *Ujamaa*. This way, the novels present *Ujamaa* ideology as monoglossic in the way it is imposed on the society and heteroglossic in the way it is implemented. Due to these dialogues, gender relations during this period are both monoglossic/centripetal (reflecting the state's and *Ujamaa*'s ideal of human equality in some aspects) and heteroglossic/centrifugal (reflecting many meanings and ambiguous relations with the state and *Ujamaa*'s ideal of human equality).

³⁶The most embarrassing event was the shooting of Dr. Kleruu, the then Iringa Regional Commissioner, in 1971 by a villager, Mwandindi, who was opposed to communal farming. Known for his dislike of *Ujamaa*, Mwandindi attracted the visit of the Regional Commissioner on Christmas day of 1971. During the fracas that ensued, the RC was shot dead.

³⁷Oscar Kambona, the first foreign minister of independent Tanzania, strongly objected to *Ujamaa* policies. He was subsequently accused of plotting to overthrow Nyerere's government. He fled to the UK. Bibi Titi also resigned from party leadership because she was not happy with some of the principles of *Ujamaa*.

³⁸See the following works by Julius Nyerere: *Ujamaa the Basis of African Socialism* (1962), *Democracy and the Party System* (1966), *Socialism and Rural Development* (1967), *The President Explains the Arusha Declaration* (1967), *Freedom and Socialism* (1968), and *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism* (1968).

In order to realise a socialist society, the government embarked on villagising the people. For many characters in the selected novels, villagisation is a conflict that is brought from outside and is seen as a threat to their lives. Thus, *Village in Uhuru* is built around a father and son conflict. Balinde, the son and the Area Commissioner, represents the government and is charged with relocating his own people from their traditional villages to the government-sponsored settlement of Chamambo. Musilanga, his father, being one of the village's traditional VIPs, sees him as a threat both to his status and to the traditions he stands for. Reading this conflict both as a family saga and a national project, the novel yields insights by means of its representation of the tensions between *Ujamaa*, the change it advocates and its subsequent impact on gender relations. Balinde's interpretation of villagisation as "building the new on the old" portrays *Ujamaa* villagisation as offering the government's economic official discourse on the one hand, but also reflecting endless borrowings from the traditional and colonial gender relations on the other. Such confluence creates either intended or unintended consequences in the life depicted in the novel, which in turn yield constructive or destructive gender relations.

Whereas *Village in Uhuru* is about the government's forced relocation of people into the *Ujamaa* village, thus defying the logic of *Uhuru*, *The Lion of Yola* recounts the efforts of the Yola villagers led by chairman Lihimba to establish an *Ujamaa* village in response to both the call of the government and the shortage of land due to the lake which is threatening to eat up most of their present land. Chairman Lihimba's proposition divides the villagers. Those in support of him agree to leave their traditional land and settle in Kindimba Juu which prospers economically. Those who object and remain in Yola are further invaded by floods and police force is eventually used to relocate them to an already established Namatui village which, although run in accordance with the principles of *Ujamaa* village, is portrayed as a failure. By portraying the failed Namatui village settlement project as a subplot to the major plot which is the Kindimba Juu successful settlement, Ndunguru offers a richer comparative account of villagisation. The slight improvement in gender relations indicated by both Ruhumbika and Ndunguru is a result of a trickle-down effect of the government's fascination with material and economic development.

Section two of the chapter focuses on the representation of the free market period. In examining the representation of gender relations as a result of this shift, the chapter uses Chachage's *Makuadi wa Soko Huria*, a novel that relates the socio-economic challenges and opportunities of the free market economy in Tanzania. The economic reforms of the 1980s

meant that the state assumed minimal interference in the economy. It promoted individual socio-economic freedoms and responsibilities. With this shift, the collective or communal ideals once advocated by *Ujamaa* gave room to the notion of individualism. Because of embracing individual economic rights and freedoms, the period is also known as the *Ruksa* period. As explained in the introduction, during this period many things became *Ruksa*—permissible. As a result, the major trope in the fiction depicting this period is, as Said Khamis notes, the “cacophony and decay” revealing both “societal rupture” and its “causes and repercussions” (91-93).

The novel represents the challenges and opportunities inherent in the new economic orientation as altering the position of the Tanzanian woman both in relation to the means of production and in her relation with the man. Whereas the man is portrayed as increasingly losing control of the patriarchal dividends, the new woman alongside him is portrayed as having access to the privileges that the man has always enjoyed. Both the man and the woman are portrayed as being in ‘league’ in terms of their relations and in the way they compete for the new opportunities and spaces. It is not only how they compete for the spaces that makes them ‘new’ but also the means they employ to negotiate their lives distinguish them from the traditional and colonial women discussed in the previous chapters. Increasingly, men are portrayed as not behaving as they should traditionally, and so are women. Because of this, gender antagonism is more prevalent during this period than the previous one.

Ujamaa’s Villagisation and Gender Relations: Village in Uhuru and The Lion of Yola

Tanzania is not the only African nation that embarked on the villagisation programme. Furthermore, villagisation is not a post-colonial government policy in the context of Tanzania. In *Tanganyika Territory: A Study of Economic Policy under Mandate*, Charlotte Leubuscher provides an account of how the British colonial government, through different native settlement projects, sought to settle the indigenous people in new places as a measure of combating landlessness in concentrated areas as well as combating sleeping sickness. Hannah Whittaker notes that in colonial Kenya, the British villagised the Kikuyu in order to contain them during the Mau Mau wars. After independence, the government villagised the people in the northern Frontier District in order “to facilitate security force operations against *Shifta* (bandit or rebel) insurgents who were engaged in campaigns of military secessionism” (343). In Mozambique, the Portuguese colonialists established protected villages or *aldeamentos* to keep villagers away from FRELIMO-led anticolonial mobilization. After independence,

villagisation was used by FRELIMO in the 1970s to develop the rural population. In the 1980s it became a programme meant to curb the activities of RENAMO insurgents. In Ethiopia, the government embarked on villagisation in 1984 in order to promote development. Villagisation was later on used as a counter-insurgency measure against the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF).³⁹ The unique feature of Tanzania's villagisation is that it was linked to *Ujamaa* and it was seen as a mechanism to make Tanzania a socialist and self-reliant nation. Selma James sums it up as "an economic, social, and political perspective to enable Tanzanians to develop themselves and their economy in the course of building a socialist society" (241).

I approach the novels as a site where multiple interpretations of the *Ujamaa* policy, in particular, the villagisation process converge. Bakhtin's idea of heteroglossia as manifests itself in concepts such as dialogism and polyphony. Although heteroglossia means the existence of different layers and language varieties in a work of art, Bakhtin states in *The Problem of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, that polyphony means "multi-voicedness" (279). The plurality of voices and language varieties in a polyphonic novel allows characters to engage in a dialogue; argue among themselves, with the author or even with the context that produces the novel. According to David Lodge, all novels are therefore polyphonic and dialogic where "a variety of conflicting ideological positions are given a voice and set in play both between and within individual speaking subjects" (86).

While analysing the state's *Ujamaa* discourse and policy especially its link to gender, I also consider how the authors portray gender in the formation of villages and how gender is played out in the lives of villagers. This analysis is done against the background of *Ujamaa* principles of family-hood or extended family, equality of all human beings, and promotion of democracy and human freedoms. The authors show that villagisation impacted in contradictory ways on women's position with regard to the control of resources, labour processes and relations, income distribution, and participation in decision-making. While some of the traditional gender inequalities are transplanted from the traditional settlements to *Ujamaa* villages, villagisation helps to exacerbate them. The frequent deployment of colonial versions of the family, which promote the nuclear family rather than the extended family, and the government's fascination with colonial models of development, means that not only are the late colonial policies on gender transferred into the postcolonial period, but the urban development models and lifestyles including urban systems of planning architecture are also

³⁹See Christy Cannon Lorgen's "Villagization in Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Tanzania" for similarities and differences in the way villagization was implemented in Tanzania, Mozambique and Ethiopia.

transferred to the villages. In this way, the portrayal of *Ujamaa* indicates that villagisation reproduces colonial relations.

Ujamaa must be seen as a process that covered about two decades and therefore it has to be analysed in phases. *Village in Uhuru* provides the representation of the first phase, in particular the government's efforts to establish model villages. *The Lion of Yola* combines both voluntary and compulsory villagisation and the later successes and failures of the project. Therefore the novels are analysed as providing a single and unified thread for my argument. Another interest is that while Ruhumbika writes during the period of *Ujamaa* itself, Ndunguru writes in retrospect. How these approaches shape the way they represent villagisation and how they shape the way gender is represented in their fiction are questions worth exploring.

Peter Nazareth identifies two ways in which a writer in a 'socialist' country can write about socialism. The first is to present "all facts, that socialism has not yet been achieved or has been side-tracked" and the second may be presenting "the criticism subjectively through a bourgeoisie consciousness" (216). Writing *Village in Uhuru* at a time when *Ujamaa* was being implemented, Ruhumbika adopts a relatively friendly approach to the subject, portraying *Ujamaa* as a perfect ideology and is critical of lower ranking officials while leaving Nyerere unscathed; an approach which Lindfors calls the "sedative of tearful laughter" where "even the harshest subjects [such as villagisation] are treated in a "mild, gentle way" (146). This must have been a way of avoiding censorship at a time when Nyerere was the president and was therefore equated to *Ujamaa* itself. By not touching on Nyerere, Ruhumbika is ironical, because when villagers question the ideals of *Uhuru* and the way *Ujamaa* is forced on them, Nyerere cannot be left unscathed. The title of the novel is therefore itself ironical. The village claims to be in *Uhuru*, yet *uhuru* is not there to be enjoyed because of the bloody events unfolding in the depicted Chamambo village settlement scheme.

The Lion of Yola instead discusses *Ujamaa* in retrospect. Through the main plot, Lihimba, a man of vision and 'the lion' of Yola, leads his people from poverty-stricken Yola to prosperity in Kindimba Juu *Ujamaa* village. The success of Kindimba Juu in the main plot is then contrasted and compared with the wider *Ujamaa* policy on the one hand and the failed Namatui *Ujamaa* village in the parallel subplot on the other. The advantage of writing in retrospect is that it allows the author to freely review villagisation without the possible anxieties of censorship that may haunt Ruhumbika's novel. In analysing the depiction of gender relations during this period, I specifically focus on the portrayed participation of

women and men in establishing the village; their participation in decision making and the difference between the ways women and men participate; the way gender features in the production processes and the actual day-to-day relations of production; where men and women stand with regard to access, distribution and control of proceeds from labour; and how the state, in particular, welfare officers, perceive gender relations and the family in the new villages.

The *Ujamaa* policy with all its emphasis on human equality did not entail gender as one of its central agendas. The obvious link of *Ujamaa* with gender equality is the occasional mention of the need to promote equality between men and women in Nyerere's writings. In *Socialism and Rural Development*, Nyerere claims that "if we want our country to make full and quick progress now, it is essential that our women live in terms of full equality with their fellow citizens who are men" (3). As Selma James notes, although *Ujamaa* was poised to promote human equality, the official discourse said nothing about "Tanzanian women's working much harder than men and the implication of this for development" (239). To compound the problem, even the Village and *Ujamaa* Villages Act (No 21, 1975) only talks of age as a qualification for membership in *Ujamaa* villages and village assemblies. The challenge here is: can we separate Nyerere from the Arusha Declaration or the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), the party? If gender appears as central in his writings yet it is absent in the official party and *Ujamaa* policy, how can one piece them together?

The response to this lacuna is that another strand of scholarship on *Ujamaa* has emerged where *Ujamaa* is examined as essentially a feminist project. This links Nyerere's conception of *Ujamaa* to his background in a polygynous family. A study by Victoria Stoger-Eising, for example, indicates that in addition to his experience as a child in a patriarchal and polygynous family, Nyerere was also, as a student at Edinburgh, influenced by the writings of John Stuart Mill, in particular, his essay "On the Subjection of Women." Thus, "When I read the book of John Stuart Mill [...] I was instantaneously reminded of my Zanaki society and of the situation of my mother. She had to toil a lot!" Nyerere observed (qtd in Stoger-Eising 129). This awareness of gender inequality in the traditional society is further buttressed in his essay "Socialism and Rural Development," in which he states that the women in traditional society were to some extent regarded as inferior, hence reaffirming his commitment to improving their situation. James also studies Nyerere's *Ujamaa* as a feminist project and she notes several good economic intentions such as "ending male domination of the rural economy [...] women to be collective owners of the land [and] its products, participating in all decisions on

crops, methods, distribution etc” (246). But she resignedly notes that “the tradition was heavy against women” (246). Both Stoger and James suggest that *Ujamaa* had a positive and negative impact on gender relations.

In *Village in Uhuru*, Musilanga is against villagisation because he cannot imagine life far from where his ancestors are buried. Secondly, villagisation means that “human beings were to stop having homes and [instead] live in a crowd like cows” (182). The analysis of this relocation is important, especially how it reshuffles the existing gender relations or introduces new ones. The intention of *Ujamaa* villagisation, as Balinde the Area Commissioner indicates, is to “to build the new on our old” (197). The dilemma of this philosophy is how *Ujamaa* villagisation will build a new society on the traditional values that are defended by Musilanga. What is evident is that not only is the traditional merged with *Ujamaa*, but also *Ujamaa* draws a lot from the colonial. This doubleness reinforces the view of *Ujamaa* literature as oxymoronic. Note, for example, how the Area Commissioner arranges Musilanga’s move to the new settlement:

You know the four houses together near the *soko*? My father’s is the biggest one, with curtains in the windows. Mateba’s is the one before you come to it. Machunga and Kibanda can place themselves as they please in the remaining two. (196)

Musilanga, Mateba, Machunga and Kibanda as brothers must stay close to each other in the new village because

[T]he extended family was to be conserved as much as possible. Son was to be placed next to a father, brother to brother, cousin alongside cousin. Heads of families were to be able to feel they were in their former proud homes, only differently constructed. (116)

The Area Commissioner’s admiration of the traditional life can be seen in the foregoing quotations. However, if this is to be taken as the Area Commissioner’s interpretation of Nyerere’s ‘fictionalised’ philosophy “building the new on the old”, the next step is to examine how this spatial deployment affects gender relations. According to Musilanga, the village houses are not as ‘proud’ as the traditional homes where each of his wives had a house on her own. The new architecture militates against polygynous marriages. Musilanga contemplates:

And was there greater shame for a man than to have a single roof for all his wives? Where was the meaning of marrying many wives then? Worse than that how could a man sleep with his wife in a house in which his mother also sleeps? Would that be a human being or an animal? (182)

This life is constraining on Musilanga. The new arrangement where co-wives share a bedroom, a kitchen and a lounge is equally constraining on his wives. Not only are we reminded that Musilanga's home in the old Chamambo "was a proper home" but it was also "a home in which, as the saying went, it took you a whole day to count the houses [...] the real proud *bandas*" (4).⁴⁰ That the description of his compound is hyperbolic is evident in the narrator's view. Hyperbole, as a literary device, says more than it literally means. The end aim of hyperbolic statements is to emphasize a claim.

Contrasting Musilanga's 'proud' home with a three-bedroom house allocated to him in the new village, the reader will certainly feel sorry for him. This way, villagisation is portrayed as having contributed to destroying some of the cultural practices of the people by taking away their freedoms. This house structure has the potential to challenge the traditional relations between the husband and the wife. If, in the new Chamambo, it is the wives who will be following their husband to his room, and not him making his nocturnal rounds, what does this mean for the husband-wife relations? Does this mean that the women can now decide when to fulfil their conjugal obligations? Although the author chooses not to focus on this question, the new architecture poses a serious challenge to the institution of polygyny and husband-wife relations and this is largely because the architecture is drawn from the colonial urban house plan. The point here is that the post-independence leadership underestimates the extent to which *Ujamaa* implementation was going to rely on existing colonial modernization models.

The Chamambo village settlement has retained some of the traditional privileges conferred on men according to seniority in that "the bigger houses were to be for large families, preference being given according to the age of the head-of-family" (116). Whereas male characters like Musilanga are at logger-heads with the Area Commissioner, there are still carry-overs from the traditional society that the leadership uses to please them. Polygynous and senior men continue to form a circle of 'VIPs' in the *Ujamaa* village because the single-wife husbands are "made to share the larger-type houses" among two families (117).

⁴⁰ 'Banda' is Swahili word for a hut. *Bandas* therefore stands for huts.

In allocating these houses to the villagers, the leadership commits yet another blunder that shows their gender blindness. There are only four categories of villagers delineated by the Area Commissioner: polygynous husbands; single-wife husbands; widows or female headed families; and single-young men or bachelors. The category of girls who have attained marriageable age but are not married yet is surprisingly not included on the Area Commissioner's list. This implies that the girl continues to be counted as part of the family until she is married. She is not considered independent or a full adult outside marriage. This indicates that the relocation does not alter some of the traditional gender inequalities. Therefore, as far as the housing allocation is concerned, villagisation is not sensitive to gender equality.

The fact that the villagisation conflict is developed around two characters who are father and son is quite limiting, especially when the aim is to represent this as a village or national project. At times, one feels as if one is reading a family saga. Yet reading it as a microcosm of the nation grants the text a national resonance. This lapse does not affect the way villagisation refashions or challenges gender relations or the authority of senior men like Musilanga. First, the cliché 'old habits die hard' applies here; the villagers move to the new village with their old values and the values cannot be shed overnight. Balinde, the Area Commissioner is regarded as going too far by disregarding the traditional separation between men and women to the extent of eating with them or visiting the kitchen. The problem is: how can one of their sons contribute to changing or breaking the customs of his ancestors by eating "with a woman!?" (82). By showing such contradictions only two years into *Ujamaa*, Ruhumbika becomes a prophetic writer depicting the persistence of traditional gender hierarchies and the imminent hardship and eventual failure of *Ujamaa*.

The Lion of Yola is exemplary in that it shows two village settlements at work. The adoption of a double-plot technique makes its portrayal of *Ujamaa* richer. Macaulay and Lanning note that double-plots present "different sides of the same theme" by acting as "a joking comment on the main action or as an ironic mirror" (174). Such an approach allows the author to exploit the theme from two different angles and by comparing and contrasting the two sides. It also provides an adequate polyphonic and heteroglossic situation in the novel. By writing in retrospect and at a time when the architect of *Ujamaa* was no longer a threat, Ndunguru is free to provide as many voices and interpretations of villagisation as possible. He becomes a revisionist writer of villagisation. This technique allows us to understand different characters'

interpretation of villagisation, what they know about villagisation, and what they think ought to be done.

Kindimba Juu village settlement is a result of the villagers' initiatives regarding when, where, how to re-settle, and how to translate the *Ujamaa* philosophy into their lives. Through this approach to villagisation, Ndunguru challenges the 'development from above' approach to villagisation. It is satirical about the government's definition of development on behalf of the villagers. The second village project he describes is the failed Namatui *Ujamaa* village. Here, people live as one family and work together as stipulated in the *Ujamaa* discourse. Nevertheless, Namatui is portrayed as a bad and failed example of settlement, because it draws on the ideals of *Ujamaa* and the life of the villagers are 'scripted' and regimented as required by *Ujamaa*. The portrayal of the use of force in relocating Yola villagers who choose not to leave on their own is a further critique of the policy. The way they are forced out of their village leaves a lot to be desired, especially when analysed against the background of policies which claim to safeguard human dignity and freedom. This latter group has an opportunity to stay first in Namatui where life is regimented as required by the *Ujamaa* policy. Finding it tough to live here, they finally move to Kindimba Juu. Therefore, Ndunguru allows us and the characters a chance to compare and contrast the two villages.

In terms of processes, the ten minutes given to the villagers by the police to remove all their belongings and put them in a safe place; the burning down of homes, granaries, and fishing gear within ten minutes; the beating up of the villagers by the police; the voyeuristic gazing at women by the police; the loss of perennial crops; and the subsequent exposure to wild animals such as lions and leopards destabilize all the villagers irrespective of gender. In a situation like this, women are portrayed as more vulnerable and as major shock-absorbers in that they carry more family responsibility than in a normal or peaceful period. The initial stages of implementing villagisation therefore prove to be more burdensome to the woman than to the man.

The work pattern in Kindimba Juu village differs from that in the traditional Yola village. The pattern here is that, in addition to working in private fields, three days are reserved for work in communal village farms where men and women work side by side. Communal work does not replace private work; it is an additional demand on the villagers. The village government also prescribes the minimum number of acreage of cash crop farms such that one is required to cultivate "coffee *shambas* of at least one thousand trees as well as a three-acre *shamba* of

food crops” (88). The villagers are also mobilized and expected to indulge in side economic activities such as pottery, basketry, mat making, fishing and others. The point here is that although women might have had a relatively higher workload in the pre-*Ujamaa* villages, with *Ujamaa* farming, their workload in the new setting doubles. The village woman is the real *mjamaa*, a socialist, who is overworked all the year round.

In the discussion of *Myombekere* in chapter two, it emerged that some crops such as vegetables and bananas are considered women’s crops while men are expected to engage in the cultivation of ‘male’ crops or fishing activities. The introduction of cash crops during the colonial period means that cash crops were associated with power that comes with having money. Control of marketing and the proceeds from the sale of such crops became power-structured and gendered. The Kindimba Juu village introduces coffee farming. It is a new experience for the people. The portrayal of coffee as a man’s crop in *The Lion of Yola* brings us to another aspect of inequality – income control. The ‘maleness’ of the crop is seen in the way the village government, the extension officers and the coffee authority consider the male as the central actor in coffee farming and marketing. Here is the picture: “while women were jealously guarding the bags of coffee inside the market building, the men were gathered outside jubilantly chatting about what they were going to do with the money they were about to get” (92). For example, Chiwanda brags that “If I get that, you’ll know me as Chiwanda the son of Lipunga”. For Susa however, the coffee dough will allow him to fulfil his long cherished dream, that is, “with that kind of dough, I think I can afford to have two wives,” which is an indication of “good public relations if I become the son-in-law of two Wahenga elders” (92).

Here, aspects of gender relations depicted in the colonial period (discussed in chapter three) are replayed. This is the embracing of polygyny by men to display their socio-economic status. This is because men actually control the actual marketing of and the income from coffee. For women in marital unions, participating in cash-crop farming is reduced to supplying labour for the cultivation of men’s crops which then helps the men to achieve their individual desires. This suggests that the economic systems put in place by *Ujamaa* exacerbate men’s privileges over those of women and are exploitative towards women. For example, as far as coffee is concerned, both the village government and the National Coffee Authority work with the heads of households. It is indicated that the village chairman “had prepared a complete list of the names of all the households’ heads which he handed over to the head clerk” of the coffee authority (95). This arrangement assumes that the head of the

household is the husband. This replay of patriarchy indicates that there is no difference between life in the old Yola and the new village in the way husbands and wives relate. This shows that villagisation is portrayed as simply an economic venture, and improvement of gender relations appears not to be one of the agendas.

For the village government, it does not matter who controls the marketing of and proceeds from coffee; rather it is how the money is used to develop the family that matters. We notice that the preference of men is to spend on conspicuous goods. John Sender and Sheila Smith show this gendered spending of cash in the context of Tanzania cash crop farming in the 1970s. The point the two authors make is that even when women have a share in the money that accrues from the selling of cash crops (usually less than what their husbands get), still they would be thrifty in their spending focusing first on the basics such as food and clothing. The Kindimba Juu men are interested in “fancy things” such as “tiny transistor radios [...] worn on the necks like charms; coloured *vitenge* [fabric] shirts; high heeled shoes popularly known as *raisoni*; bell bottoms, sun goggles, neckties, imitation wrist watches and so on”. Few cared to buy bicycles, “which they decorated with several mirrors and coloured ribbons” and some “bought household utensils for their wives: plates, bowls, kettles, water buckets” (101). That the men are interested in conspicuous consumption and do not prioritize household basics, is a point here. When all this is done against a background of wives and children who are in “tattered clothes,” or “scantily dressed,” or “walking in rags” as the narrator frequently refers to them, it highlights the continuation of patriarchal privileges in society at a time when human equality is being sloganeered. This portrays *Ujamaa* as a project obsessed with improvement of agricultural production and increase in income which do not do much to address the traditional inequality. It also suggests that the woman in the *Ujamaa* village is still sacrificing a lot for the family.

The *Ujamaa* discourse stresses the development-democracy nexus as one of the pillars of development. In Kindimba Juu, institutions for enhancing this participation exist but they are predominantly male. Not only are men portrayed as decision makers, they are also portrayed as central to the narrative itself. When the woman appears in decision making organs or at a village assembly, she is simply referred to as the lady. They are still perceived in terms of their roles of motherhood – an indication that the new villages are simply new physical locations where people have largely transplanted their traditions. The ‘unnamed’ lady-councillor in a committee of Uhenga village, which is discussing the establishment of Kindimba Juu, is, for example, portrayed as

[I]nterested in social matters. She wanted to know if the Wapoto would be prepared to marry Wahenga girls and if they would be prepared to allow their girls to be married by the Wahenga [...]. This [...] caused laughter in the *baraza*. (83)⁴¹

Since the action of the novel takes place in the 1970s, one wonders why there is only a single female councillor – a depiction that resonates with the portrayal of Suzie as the only member in a sixty-person PASA executive committee in a nationalist period in *The Serpent-Hearted Politician*. This portrayal suggests that between the portrayed nationalist struggles in the 1950s and two decades into independence, nothing or very little changes in terms of female representation in decision-making organs.

Like Suzie in *The Serpent-Hearted Politician*, the lady councillor is trivialized as well. The trivialization of the woman's contribution by portraying her as an intellectual minor is the price she must pay as a female in a predominantly male committee. She is interested in what society considers the highest achievement of an African woman – marriage. However, it is important to situate her interest in 'social matters' as exemplary, given the fact that the government policy, just like the male councillors, seems to bypass the social implications of villagisation. The female councillor wants to know how the new dispensations will harmonize relations between men and women. Her contribution is a pointer to her awareness of her position as the representative of women in the committee and her concerns are in favour of the plight of girls in the society. This is in line with what Ogundipe-Leslie refers to as the rural women enacting feminist stances even though they have never heard of the word feminism. The overall picture is that even though *Ujamaa* sought to promote popular participation by providing for the equal participation of adults in village committees and assemblies, these structures exist mainly for men.

The Kindimba Juu village is portrayed as a model with regard to economic development and life is portrayed to be changing fast. Thus, Ndunguru links the economic prosperity with the emergence of prostitution and or temporary marriages, in particular during the coffee sales season:

[It was] common among the indigenous Wahenga to elope with women during the coffee season when most young people had plenty of money. The

⁴¹*Baraza* is Swahili word for 'council.'

women usually remained with their partners only long enough to help them exhaust their money, and then ran away from them. (102)

The notion of cohabitation invoked here contrasts with the view of marriage in the pre-colonial period. Some women are using the coffee sale season as an opportunity to empty men's coffers. Economic prosperity is portrayed as an incentive for men and women to participate in this 'oldest profession' or, by extension, the beginning of temporary marriages. From a wider perspective, village prostitution is an indication of the failure of the *Ujamaa* project. Yet there is an open equation of prostitution with the urban by most scholars who study or portray this subject in both the colonial and post-colonial periods. This forms a major strand in Luise White's book *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi*. A similar theme is presented by Marja Liisa Swantz's work on the Tanzania's post-independence context. The trend that is suggested in these works is that the would-be prostitutes travel from their rural families to the urban areas where they become prostitutes. Unfortunately, this also cuts across the majority of Tanzanian novels published during the *Ujamaa* period. The prostitutes in Penina Mhando's *Hatia*, Prince Kagwema's *Chausiku's Dozen*, Ndyanao Balisidya's *Shida*, Mohamed Said's *Utengano*, and Baka Abdul's *Salome*, to mention just a few, return back to the villages for reformation – to become 'good women.' If we are to read these writers' fascination with the mechanical 'return-to-the-village' motif alongside Ndunguru's portrayal of vices in the *Ujamaa* villages, we see that the writers underestimate the existence of similar vices in the villages or the extent to which life in the villages had been changed as a result of both colonial policies and the *Ujamaa* period.

The challenge becomes: for someone who is used to such life in town, once they return to a village like Kindimba Juu, are they really going to reform themselves? It is perhaps only by comparing the prevalence of vices in the rural and urban settings that the writers' portrayal of the village as a place for recovery and reformation can have positive meaning. In the post *Ujamaa* or contemporary period, as Lugano indicates, it has become a trend for AIDS victims to return to the village to die. Lugano writes that the village is a place "to return to before exiting this World" (75).

The depiction of the regimenting of life in an *Ujamaa* village differentiates Kindimba Juu from Namatui. In Namatui, a weekly rota will tell what a man or woman will do in that particular week. The challenge however, is if both husband and wife in Namatui are subjected to a rota; how does this impact on the psychology of a husband especially in the way he relates with his wife? Emiliias is not worried that he has to be ordered to appear on the weekly

rota, but his major fear is, “How about our wives? Will they also be ordered to do this or that like us?” (155). His fear, therefore, is to lose control of his wife. He is willing to lose all freedoms except the control of his wife, regarded by him as his property. Villagisation is, in this sense, portrayed as a threat to the intransigent husband. Emilias’s fear of losing control over his wife is similar to the case of the houseboy in the colonial period that I discussed in chapter three. The houseboy is a willing person as far as he relates to his Indian employer, but is not prepared to lose face before his wife or his own people. The village government in an *Ujamaa* village emasculates the male *mjamaa* just as the whites or the Indians terrorise the houseboy in the colonial period that I discussed in chapter three.

The representation of the location of Namatui village near the main road at the expense of good land is another concern that the villagers raise. This location compromises the logic of promoting agriculture because it increases the distance the villagers have to travel to and from their farms. As a result, families have to walk twelve miles to and from their fields. In order to cut down the amount of time spent on walking, heads of households take turns to take care of the fields while wives “often found themselves alone in the village at night” and “rumours had it that some of the village officials were seen at awkward hours of the night in their homes” (160). This representation of the family as a fractured unit is highlighted as a challenge to the very notion of stable families, which *Ujamaa* promised to promote. This again is similar to the experience of migrant labourers during the colonial period. In *The Gathering Storm* there are similar cases of families being fractured due to both short and long absences of husbands. In essence therefore, *Ujamaa* is portrayed to be reproducing colonial problems.

The analysis of the two novels shows that villagisation is portrayed as having multiple effects on gender relations. The key theme is the mismatch between the principles of *Ujamaa* – equality of human beings, freedom, human rights and democracy – and the way villagisation is implemented on the one hand, and the way life is lived in the villages on the other. Material prosperity is promoted at the expense of social equality and relations. Whereas people move with their values from the traditional villages to *Ujamaa* settlements, the settlements offer opportunities as well as challenges. Where we notice a positive change in gender relations, it does not occur as a result of a deliberate effort to cause such improvement; rather, the improvement simply arises as part of the general package of rural modernization. In other words, if *Ujamaa* aimed at narrowing the separation between villagers, then recalling of colonial or traditional gender roles differentiation is a contradiction between *rhetoric* and

praxis. In a similar way, the persistence of traditional values in the *Ujamaa* village indicates the tenacity of old values.

The portrayal of village life in this period as restricted and prison-like may be seen as a challenge to the writers who are fascinated with the return-to-the-village motif. This restricted life in the villages accounts for the rural-urban migration that characterized the early 1980s. The reason is that the urban setting was seen as a freer space and an area for recovering from the village miseries. Rather than containing rural-urban migration as it was originally envisioned in the policy, the period of villagisation as Anthony O'Connor notes, witnessed the fastest urbanization and rural-urban migration that had hitherto occurred in Tanzania.

Fiction writers have since then sought to explain the failure of *Ujamaa*. In *Kaptula la Marx* (1999) [Marx's Shorts], Euphrase Kezilahabi argues that the leadership made a serious blunder in thinking that they could wear Karl Marx's *kaptula*. These shorts turn out to be too big for Tanzania; it is an oversize garment. C.G Mung'ongo's *Njozi Iliyopotea* (2004) [Lost Dream] depicts *Ujamaa* as a dream which was never realised. Thus, the 1980s witnessed a transition from *Ujamaa* to liberalization. Nyerere's retirement in practice marked the end of a state-controlled economy and *Ujamaa* era. The extent to which the political, cultural and economic liberalization challenged and or empowered Tanzanians is a fraught subject. Even more challenging is how the post-*Ujamaa* liberalization has affected gender relations. In the following section, I focus on the representation of this period and on how writers portray gender relations as a product of this period.

The New Dawn: Neoliberalism and Gender Relations in *Makuadi wa Soko Huria*

In their study of African theatre and drama, Lokangaka and Sarinjeive note that the 1980s were a breakthrough decade in the politics of the representation of female characters in African fiction. During this period, they claim, "a new vision broke upon the literary scene; social arts that attack social injustices in all its forms began to appear" (122). Dissatisfied with the image accorded to a female character in a Nigerian novel, the Nigerian literary critic Emenyonu "declared in the late seventies that writers were yet to discover 'the other woman' in society. This will be the woman of the 1980s" (qtd in Ekpa 30). Tagged as "assertive, individualistic, daring" (ibid 30); an "antithesis of the traditional virtuous caring mother" (Schipper 43) or a "modern woman" (Mwaifuge 228), this woman is weighed on a 'bad' versus 'good' scale. Using *Makuadi wa Soko Huria* and making reference to other texts such as Jackson Kalindimya's *Wimbi la Huzuni* [Wave of Sadness] (1988) and Richard Mabala's

Hawa the Bus Driver (1988) and *Mabala, the Farmer* (1988), I observe that the writers portray this period as having produced not only a ‘new’ Tanzanian woman or female character, but they also lead to the emergence of a ‘new’ man or male character. These are a product of the existing opportunities during that period. The period provides avenues for both men and women to discard some of the old aspects of gender relations, develop new identities, or even combine the new with the old ones. As a result, gender relations in this period are oxymoronic in character.

Adopting the first person narration technique, Chachage fields Fidelis Msakapanofu as the narrator. He is part of all that happens in the story, he claims. Fidelis becomes both the focalizer (the one who sees) and the narrator (the one who tells/speaks). Written in the post *Ujamaa* period, the novel, just like the lives of the characters, retains a strong connection with the past, such that the pre-colonial, colonial and *Ujamaa* periods act as a backdrop against which the new period evolves. Yet the most visible connection is the immediate past – the *Ujamaa* period. Much as the characters are engaged in self-evaluation, they are equally involved in evaluation of both *Ujamaa* and the new period to the extent that the comparison and contrast between the two periods becomes one of the key concerns. Thus, two camps are created: the anti-*Ujamaa* or pro-capitalist characters and the characters that are nostalgic about *Ujamaa*. The dilemma, however, is that much as the *Ujamaa* nostalgic characters want to go back to *Ujamaa*, they can only do so to a limited extent, in particular, in respect to *Ujamaa* leadership codes. However, the transition is a reality and both the narrator and the reader are reminded by Alhaji Said, a registrar of Newspapers “ku[m]sahau Nyerere na kifimbo chake” (47) [to forget Nyerere and his walking stick].

Although Said works for the government, he is against Msakapanofu’s attempt to register his newspaper because the newspaper’s mission is to reveal the seamy side of government’s approach to liberalization. Said becomes a *kuadi*, a pimp, pimping for the government. For him, not only did *Ujamaa* delay both national and individual development, but a free market is also the best opportunity to heal the wounds of *Ujamaa*. This bourgeois thinking is shared by Alibhai, a Tanzanian of Indian origin. Not only did he suffer during *Ujamaa* by being referred to by Nyerere as *bwanyenye uchwara*, a petty bourgeois, and a pimp for the western multinationals, he is also one of the TANU youths who does not believe that “maana ya Ujamaa ni watu wote kuwa masikini” (119) [The meaning of *Ujamaa* is for all the people to be poor]. Alibhai’s misgivings as an Indian is understandable, for *Ujamaa*, especially nationalization, affected them to such an extent that most of them chose to leave the country

or had to stay and start afresh after *Ujamaa*. Both Alibhai and Mooney, therefore, dismiss Nyerere as a “Kichwamaji” (87), [an empty-headed person]. Mooney, a white man, who we later understand is a University professor during *Ujamaa*, becomes an investor after *Ujamaa*. To him, the new era is synonymous with development or wealth in the same way *Ujamaa* and Nyerere symbolize poverty. He notes that “tatizo la Tanzania lilikuwa ni kupapukia *Ujamaa* mapema mno” [The problem with Tanzania was to embrace Socialism pre-maturely]. The new opportunities, in particular money-making and the happiness that comes with it, are such that “haya mambo yasingefikirika wakati ule wa *Ujamaa*” (87) [These things would not have been conceivable during *Ujamaa*].

Chachage’s decision to portray such a ‘bourgeois’ consciousness, as Nazareth proposes, is a deliberate narrative strategy to create a heteroglossic situation in the novel. It also resonates with Mudimbe’s metaphor of the post-independence literature as an oxymoron. This is balanced with another group of characters that are nostalgic about *Ujamaa*, which is represented by Sifuni, a female journalist. She leads a team of journalists to find out and reveal to the public the sale of the Rufiji Delta to foreign investors. Although the investment has a serious environmental impact, through corrupt politicians and local ‘pimps’ the delta is sold to a multinational company. Sifuni is thus portrayed as an eco-feminist working together with men and women to solve this puzzle. Sifuni’s eco-feminism is paralleled with the conduct of Binti Wenga, an old and illiterate village woman who works tirelessly to fight for fellow village women to be compensated for their land that has been sold to the investors. Using the tensions portrayed through the two groups, Chachage shows that transition is a reality and the reader is therefore left to take sides or even situate himself/herself as a bystander.

Chachage’s onomastics indicate that characters’ names have meanings. In reinforcing the theme of ‘money by any means’, one of the ‘pimps’ of foreign investors is called Mshiko: *Mshiko* is an informal Swahili word for ‘money.’ Mooney, the white investor, symbolically represents money, and the name is perhaps deliberately misspelt to convey this theme. The narrator himself is called Msakapanofu, literally meaning, ‘one who looks for the most edible part’. However, Msakapanofu is actually against the corruption that litters the period; he dismisses this as his surname and prefers his given name of Fidelis. With perhaps a Latin interpretation of Fidelis, as ‘faithful’ or ‘loyal,’ the narrator brags that his life is “ishara ya uaminifu, kama jina lilivyo” (4) [A symbol of faithfulness, as the name suggests]. His female protagonist too is coloured by not only a beautiful name but a name that equals to that of the

narrator, Fidelis. Sifuni, the name of the female main character is a Swahili word for “Praise.” Sifuni is not ready to ‘praise’ the system; rather the author wants the reader to praise her for the job she does to reveal the corruption that is portrayed in the selling of the delta. As he identifies himself with Sifuni, Fidelis, like the author, lives his name as well.

Characters’ ‘thirst for development’ in this period is translated as a thirst for money, love, affluence, freedom and all that they were deprived of them during *Ujamaa*. Sifuni offers a more convincing summary of the period:

Leo hivi, mapenzi ni neno lililobadilika kabisa maana yake, sasa mapenzi ni uhusiano wa mtu na gari au mali yake; Uhuru na Ukombozi yanamaanisha uwezo wakumiliki simu ya mkononi na kadhalika. Neno utu limegeuzwa kuwa kifupisho cha utukufu. (143)

[At the moment, the meaning of the word love has changed totally. Love means the relationship between a person and his car or wealth. Freedom and liberation means a person’s ability to own a mobile phone and other things [...]. The word humanity has been reduced to glory].

Sifuni’s insight resonates with Dr. Kamongo’s equation of *Ujamaa* with the “man-eat-nothing” philosophy and the free market with the “man-eat-man” society. The former is worse than the latter, Dr. Kamongo concludes. He warns Tanzanians that politicians “are telling you that man-eat-man society is bad. But, is it worse than man-eat-nothing society that they are creating in our beloved motherland?” (96). Dr. Kamongo plays an anti-*Ujamaa* role in Samwilu Mwaffisi’s *Black Mercenaries* (2002). The gist of it is that Dr. Kamongo stands for the historical Dr. Kambona who opposed *Ujamaa*. The lure of money may be explained better through the ‘man-eat-man’ philosophy that characterizes the free market economy. The lure of money is a new development because according to *Ujamaa* and Nyerere, “the development of a country is brought about by people, not by money. Money, and the wealth it represents, is the result and not the basis of development” (*Essays* 243). The obsession with affluence is clear in the characters’ fascination with Mercedes Benzes, BMWs and gold necklaces as Chachage shows. He insists that these obsessions were “mitindo iliyoenea miaka ya themanini” (83) [lifestyles that emerged in the eighties]. The four bases of development enshrined in the *Ujamaa* discourse, namely people, land, good policies and good leadership are at the mercy of only a few people but the majority is in favour of the new orientation.

In terms of the portrayal of gender relations, Chachage's novel which was published in 2005 is both a revisionist project and a reasonable portrayal of the present situation. In many ways, the novel represents the effort to update the image of the African woman. This coincides with the feminist movement that has and continues to characterize the post-*Ujamaa* period both in Tanzania and the world in general. I see him as a feminist revisionist in the sense that he revises the attitudes and portrayal of the woman to such an extent that the woman is given a central role in the plot of the novel. In the majority of works by male authors, women rarely feature as central and consequential characters. In such works they do not have opportunity to shine and outshine their male counterparts. Alongside this centralization of the female figure, he also re-conceptualizes the male and inscribes new traits on him. In so doing, he creates both 'new' male and female characters. The fact that the narrator is male does not hamper this technique, and in fact, the narrator is himself a staunch supporter of the female protagonist, Sifuni. It is certainly not simply the author's intention to 'salvage' the 'femaleness' in the narrative, but even the situation allows him to do so.

By having Sifuni as the key figure in the narrative, Chachage challenges the issue of marginality of women in the majority of novels surveyed in this study and many other works by Tanzanian male authors which tend to paint the picture of an all-male society. The deployment of Binti Wenga and having her at the centre of the narrative is also important. Through her as an ordinary and illiterate woman, Chachage is saying something about the new period. The new period is giving freedom, not only to educated women like Sifuni, but to ordinary women as well. This way, he challenges the 'footnoting' of the woman in the male-authored narrative.

However, centring the woman alone, as Mazrui warns, is not enough because a woman can be centred but not empowered or liberated. To what extent are the female characters consequential in the narrative? And to what extent are they independent in their thinking? In view of these questions, the second narrative strategy that makes Chachage a unique feminist revisionist writer is in the way he portrays these women as challenging patriarchy while also showing how they try to exist outside the constraints of patriarchy. This attempt to dislocate patriarchal ideologies is a point that I stress and see as a distinctive quality of the novel set in this period. That is whereas the female character in the pre-colonial and colonial periods examined above are portrayed as people whose success depends on their sexuality and dependence on men, Chachage's Sifuni and several other female characters in this period use their education and economic independence to liberate themselves. Whereas it is their

“economic dependence” and “political impotence” to use Kruger’s words, that force the women portrayed in previous historical periods to “accommodate to the existing [unequal] gender relations” (61), the success of Sifuni as a representative of a new woman depends on her efforts, education and competence. In this sense, the writers are not simply dishing out favours to the female characters. It is the period in question and the fact that in real life women demonstrate these behaviours that motivate the author.

One of the first Tanzanian writers to respond to the call for updating the image of the Tanzanian woman in fiction is Richard Mabala, an educator, writer and activist whose writings include the portrayal of the woman in a traditional male occupation as a bus driver in *Hawa the Bus Driver* (1988). This short story was at one time a compulsory text for the Form Two English language secondary school syllabus. Hawa, the heroine, begins her day by frying buns to sell in the slum where she lives before going to her work as a driver of a public bus. As a bus driver, she is portrayed as a no-nonsense, tough, morally-upright and hardworking woman. She defeats male chauvinism by beating up men; disciplining her passengers; fighting drunkard passengers and thieves; and she even saves one of the buses from a crash. She soon earns respect from her society and becomes famous, more famous than her husband. The husband, in the meantime, is jealous and is warned by Hawa’s admirers thus:

Hawa the heroine, don’t play with her, she has arms like baobab trees,

She will squeeze you to death.

Hawa’s husband, Beware of your wife. Don’t play with her, she might eat you for breakfast [...] she might squeeze you to death. (17)

Hawa, like Chimera, a she-monster in the Greek mythology that vomits fire, is a fearsome woman respected by both the society and her husband because she physically defeats men, but more importantly, she is a responsible wife and mother. Her life then fits well into the major tenets of African feminism as delineated by Davies and Graves, in particular the respect and importance of work and respect for the institution of the family. It is, therefore, her ability to merge her tomboy-like behaviour with her work along with her status as a mother and wife that make her earn so much respect in her society. She can force her entry into an occupation hitherto considered a male job and combine this work with the home chores of motherhood. It means that she can do all these and still remain a woman.

The portrayal of the woman as a strong, reliable wife and hard worker is also extended in Mabala's story, *Mabala the Farmer* (1988). Mabala is a farmer who is portrayed as a lazy drunkard and irresponsible husband whose household depends on the hard work of his wife, Mama Martina. Although the community around him understands Mabala to be a farmer, it is ironical that all the farm work is done by his wife, the real farmer. Here Mabala, a male author, does what Stratton considers to be a duty of female writers which is an "attempt to restore dignity and self respect to African women" (8) by portraying them positively. Such approach as Marie Kruger demonstrates in her reading of Penina Muhando's plays, helps to establish the Tanzanian woman as an "active and speaking subject" through a metaphor of the "mother pillar" that she borrows from Muhando's play *Nguzo Mama*. Mother pillar, she argues, is a "metaphor for peace and unity, but also for the pivotal role women play in society" (160). The fact that Mama Martina is the pillar of the family as the provider is important as we acknowledge the contribution of the 'new' woman to the welfare of her family. However, from a different angle, Mabala the author (not the husband) is critical of the muledom of the Tanzanian woman.

Mabala, like Chachage, represents 'new' male authors who are committed to projecting the improved socio-economic position in society. These writers are willing to take part in updating the image of the woman by showing her as a reliable marriage partner who is able to subvert traditional notions of femininity namely socio-economic dependence. Although this subversion does not mean the swapping of roles between husbands and wives, it certainly has implications for the relations between the two. For instance, the song that is sung to praise Hawa (for outwitting the male chauvinists) is not simply important in stroking her ego, but it is also a message to the intransigent husbands. The picture of a sad, jealous and helpless husband who is threatened with being "eaten for breakfast" by his wife is a "new" husband who must put up with the strength of the new kind of wife. In this light, Mabala and Chachage fit Simone de Beauvoir's definition of feminists: "those women or even men who fight to change the position of women, in liaison with and yet outside the class struggle, without subordinating that change to a change in society" (qtd in Rosalind, 27). That is a feminist is "everyone who is aware of and seeking to end women's subjugation in any way" (Tuttle 107), and "takes a discernible anti-patriarchal and antisexist position" (Moi qtd. in Eagleton 152). It means a feminist writer gives "voice to the 'marginalised (repressed, silenced)'" which "might well lead to 'a discernible anti-patriarchal and anti-sexist position'" (Eagleton 156).

The challenge that the ordinary woman (such as Hawa, Mama Martina and Binti Wenga) poses to the man in the represented neo-liberal period is interesting, considering that they are not as educated as Sifuni. While for women such as Sifuni, education and economic independence account for their ability to successfully challenge and subsequently move beyond patriarchal ideologies, it is the socio-economic opportunities and socio-political awareness prevalent in the new economic orientation that seem to offer other ordinary women wings to fly. It is in this light that John Mbonde commends Chachage for portraying Binti Wenga, an ordinary, semi-literate village old-woman as an engine for gender equality activism. This is because she represents “wananchi wa kawaida [...] siyo first lady wala siyo mtu mashuhuri kisiasa [...] kuwa kichokoo shupavu cha Nafasi ya mwanamke katika jamii” (212). [Binti Wenga represents ordinary people. Despite the fact that she is neither a First Lady nor a prominent political personality, she is portrayed as a catalyst and pillar for gender activism in her society]. Binti Wenga leads the struggle of women to demand their rights. The Ruhumba villagers have had their land sold by the government to the investor. But the replay of colonial land policy robs women of their right to be paid in the same way their male counterparts are paid because: “waliokuwa wanapewa malipo ni wanaume tu. Nyumba zilizokuwa na wanawake zilinyimwa kwa mdai kwamba kimila aridhi ni ya mwanamke” (116) [Men were the only people who were paid. Female-headed households were denied the payment for the reason that they were not recognized by custom to be owners of land]. The fight that Binti Wenga puts up against male-dominated government organs is similar to the one that Hawa displays by disciplining her male passengers. Therefore, like Hawa “akaheshimiwa na wanawake wote, na kuhofiwa na wanaume wa pale kijijini” [she was respected by all women and feared by men in that village]. Such then is the delineation of the new ordinary woman who is respected because of her contribution to her family and society. She is either respected or feared because of her contribution to her family or because she confronts patriarchy head-on. Hawa and Binti Wenga represent an attempt to dislocate patriarchal ideology even though the authors are male.

In Chachage’s vision, a free market economy is synonymous with economic and moral corruption. This results in characters living a ‘riddled’ life. For example, Sifuni’s stance is that she would rather be a free woman than face the uncertainties of having to live with a man. She is prepared to face the consequence, namely “hakuna mwanaume atakayenielewa na hilo ndilo suala ambalo nimelihofia siku zote: kutokueleweka” (210) [no man will understand me. This is all that I have feared all these days: to be misunderstood]. Yet after fifteen years, she is in love again and planning to marry Mjuba, a fellow journalist. Sifuni is oscillating between

radicalism (in that she no longer wants marriage) and at the same time struggling to embrace it. This ‘doubleness’ is the dilemma that faces the portrayed contemporary Tanzanian woman in that she does not fit the stereotype of the anti-marriage western woman, as Rich theorises, and she is not as free from African values as she claims to be. Sifuni’s psychology falls between these two extremes. It is a sign of doubleness entailed by the device of oxymoron. However, the fact that she delays her marriage and decides when to marry indicates that marriage is no longer a priority for women as it was in the traditional society. Therefore, with regard to marriage, the portrayed ‘new’ woman has greater freedom and choice regarding who and when to marry.

Although Sifuni like other women in this period is portrayed as being in dialogue with herself, she is able to live her full life because she can make choices about the life she wants to lead. Subsequently, she can defend and express herself. Apart from centralising the female characters in their narrative, the ‘new’ authors also attempt to make “audible, the mute, voiceless woman” thus making readers aware of the “undesirable stereotypes and other shortcomings in female portraiture” (Davies and Graves 15). One such writer is Jackson Kalindimya who gives voice to his female character in *Wimbi la Huzuni* (1988) [Wave of Sadness]. In this novel, Shamsha, a rich and educated woman, complains that the new women try

[T]o get more education and do things with more freedom. They try in every way to express their sorrows, their happiness and their feelings more openly unlike in the past. And when they do so they are misunderstood by people who say they are cheapening themselves. This is not true. (qtd in Mabala 58)⁴²

As an educated and rich woman, Shamsha has access to all luxuries that her male counterparts have. She is able to approach men and propose to them thereby subverting the traditional expectation where the man is the initiator of relationships. When she invites her fiancé to a hotel room where she wants to convince him to marry her, she laces his drink with drugs, ‘rapes’ him and later on buys him a wedding suit and even pays for a marriage certificate. Shamsha’s behaviour is essentially an assumption of behaviour conventionally associated with violent masculinity by a woman. This display of masculinity by a female character resonates with Judith Butler’s idea of gender as a performance. Here the logic is that

⁴²This is Mabala’s translation. The novel is in Swahili.

masculinity can as well be performed by women in much the same way femininity can be performed by men even though feminine characteristics are viewed as natural to the female and are largely inferior to the masculine characteristics linked to the male” (Eagleton 155). My argument here is that although we can read Shamsha as an example of a ‘new’ female character in that she displays violent masculinity against the man, the bigger picture that emerges here is that feminine characteristics as markers of inferiority are not limited to women only in the same way masculine characteristics as markers of superiority may not be unique to men only.

Another example of a rich working woman is found in Mbunda Msokile’s *Thamani ya Ukubwa* (1979) [The Value of Being a Boss]. Rinda Musekusi, the main character, is having a good time as a boss. As a headmistress and later on a managing director of the government-owned Mikeka factory, she uses her position to enjoy life and seduce male employees to satisfy her sexual needs. The power that comes with position and money allows her to express her freedom by doing exactly what has traditionally been a preserve of men, good or bad. Here I am neither suggesting that the women are becoming men nor do I intend to argue that empowerment is equated with masculinity lest I emphasise the stereotypical reading of feminism as a woman “striving to become a man” (Femi Ojo-Ade quoted in Nfah-Abbenyi, 7). I use the depiction of these women to argue that such ‘masculinisation’ of female characters should be seen as a deliberate narrative strategy that facilitates women to transgress into the masculine domain and offers to extend the definition of empowerment of female characters. Reading this strategy against *Parched Earth* as a control text, we see that it allows female characters to define their own form of empowerment. Doreen’s transgressive behaviour, she believes, allows her to “find [her] own path” (223) and to “speak her mind” (253). It is a “journey of knowledge” and an attempt to “return into self and the meeting with truths” (167), she emphasizes. This journey entails learning to “fight life with life” (169), she concludes. It is not therefore simply the question of centralising Doreen in the narrative that portrays her as a ‘new’ female character and Lema as a ‘new’ breed of Tanzanian authors, it also has to do with the voice that the author gives her. According to Aaron Rosenberg, Doreen’s empowerment is rendered through the use of first-person narrative approach because the novelistic events presented are “made more believable as they are presented from the perspective of the person who has experienced them” (44) — the character’s inner feelings.

It might appear to be an oversimplification to suggest that this empowerment is solely a result of women’s ability under the new dispensation to access education and money. The third

example however, should help to deconstruct this oversimplification as it indicates that even the ordinary woman is challenging the stereotype of a sexually submissive and passive woman. Namukasa is an eighteen-year old girl in Kagwema's *Married Love is a Plant*. She looks younger than she actually is. This keeps men away from her for fear that she has not attained the age of consent. When she meets Ufwa, Ufwa is faced with this dilemma of sleeping with a minor. When Ufwa refuses, she is straight: "I am coming to get it [...] I am not leaving this room mister until I have been laid" (36). Namukasa, like many women in this period is free to express her sexual freedom to the extent that they subvert the notions of the male as the initiator. Alyward Shorter refers to this period as a "sexual revolution" and insists that the sexual licence in the 1980s might also be explained by the widespread use of contraceptives during this period. Thus, Eva in the same novel is not worried because "why should a girl hurriedly marry a man when with taking simple precautions she can get all sex?" (79). For Eva, birth control methods and their increasing availability during this period is an incentive for the sexual freedom of women. The portrayed 'new' woman is challenging the unwritten rule that "it is boys who are supposed to approach to propose marriage to women [and] it is men who are supposed to make sexual advances to women" (Nguma 250). The authors show that these women have snatched traditionally male prerogatives by initiating sexual advances.

Such representation of the 'new' female characters denotes my delineation of the new writer, a feminist writer who makes it possible for female characters, as Ama Ata Aidoo notes, "to be themselves without any assumed dumbness and pretended weaknesses which all societies expect from women and women in fiction" (20). Secondly, it also helps to reinforce or to deconstruct some of the theories. For example, Msokile's inversion shows that what Laura Mulvey in her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" refers to as a "male gaze" – a way of voyeuristically looking at a female body by a heterosexual male, has its equivalent, a 'female gaze.' Rinda Musekusi, the woman director, finds pleasure in voyeuristically gazing at her male subordinates and is even attracted by their hairy chests in the same way Jagua Nana's transparent brassiers shock men in Cyprian Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana*. This scopophilia [Greek: love of looking], a term that Mulvey uses to describe the love of looking at people, by men and the resultant pleasure obtained therefrom becomes not only a source of pleasure but objectifies the person being looked at.

The idea here is that the woman manager is able to subject her male employees to a curious, voyeuristic, and controlling gaze in much the same way Kagwema's male characters in the

novel *Society in the Dock* do. In terms of theory, the notion of a female gaze challenges Sigmund Freud's assumption that there is only one form of libido – male libido –, since it indicates that a female libido exists as well. Freud (mistakenly) asserts that if libido is present in both sexes, then it is of a male nature. According to Freud, “the libido is constantly and regularly male in essence, whether it appears in man or in woman” (qtd in Beauvoir 71). Thus the female gaze delineated above, indicates, as Simone de Beauvoir notes, that a “feminine libido [...] having its own original nature” (71) exists. The woman director has this forceful character and as a ‘new’ woman in Tanzanian fiction, she is able to express it.

The ‘new’ woman gives a lot to her society. Sifuni leads a team of journalists to find out about and reveal to the public the corruption involved in the Rufiji Delta investment. She is not understood in relation to what she is for a man but for what she does for the society. She defies the assertion by Gayatri Spivak that “the subaltern as female cannot be heard or read” (308). According to Spivak, “within the definition of subalternity as such there is a certain not-being-able-to-make-speech-acts that is implicit” (290). Sifuni, as an empowered female character, is not only central to the narrative, she can speak; she can do; she can be heard, and more importantly she can speak for other subalterns and the general society. As an educated and professional woman, she separates herself from the traditional women surveyed in previous chapters. In contradistinction with the colonial education of women, Sifuni's education is no longer that of domesticity; it is the same education that is given to her male counterparts. With this kind of education she is then able to do things which her male counterparts are doing, including arguing and debating issues and contributing to the wellbeing of her society. The ‘new’ woman is therefore portrayed to be contributing immensely to the family and nation in general and she is appreciated for this role.

The representation of the older generation and the new generation indicates how alienated from each other the two are in this period. Hanid, a central female character in *Married Love is a Plant* recalls that in her puberty ritual she

[H]ad been once advised by an aunt not to respond at all to a husband's angry remarks like white women do. She had told her that if she responded with equal anger to his angry replies or remarks, it would be a sure way of giving him an excuse to look for less educated African girls who would give him the typical African respect women have for a man. (120)

Hanid's aunt is a product of patriarchal indoctrination to the extent that she is one of its agents participating in transferring to the younger generation the tradition that prevents women from living their full lives. In the same way, Mwaifuge sees Doreen in *Parched Earth* as representing the new generation, a generation that, unlike the older generation, seeks to transform existing gender relations. This explains why "Doreen's mother accepts traditional norms and values without questioning or rejecting them" (234). A replay of the portrayal of older generation women as accomplices of patriarchy is seen in Kezilahabi's *Rosa Mistika* where Regina advises Rosa, her daughter who is leaving for boarding school, not to abort if she gets pregnant, promising her that she would take care of the baby.. Like Hanid, Rosa defies the older generation's teaching and aborts several times. It would seem that Hanid and Rosa look at these cautions as an eye-opener to them and as incentives for them to rebel. In any case, the two characters represent a move away from their parents' generation that was built on women's perpetuation of patriarchal values. Secondly, one notices the contrasts between Rosa who aborts her pregnancies during this period and the women in the pre-colonial period in chapter two who even commit suicide because of childlessness. Having children in this period is portrayed as an economic burden.

By alienating herself from the older generation, the 'new' woman risks being seen as a rebel, and indeed she rebels. As a wife, Hanid has to fight first using her domestic sphere where we are told she is "a superb cook, but she always served her husband extremely poor dishes whenever she was angry with him. Ufwa knew this fact very well" (154). If this fails, she has another alternative: "She would break on him anything, particularly the valuables she could lift, unless he calmed her in good time" (156). Such behaviour makes her a 'western woman' and it is at this point that her husband defines her as a 'new' woman:

He wondered how his wife could forget or ignore the realities of being an *African woman*. How could a female he paid bride-price to bring her under the roof of his house talk like that! She must be crazy or temporarily insane. She must be a *new African woman*. (143)

Here, Ufwa is engaged in what Bakhtin calls a monologue or inner speech where he raises questions about his relationship with his wife. Bakhtin notes that even individual monologues are essentially dialogic because they entail self-questioning and self-answering. In Ufwa's opinion, Hanid is an empowered woman because of economic independence:

[B]oth the husband and wife earned an income not from the sale of jointly cultivated crops but from monthly salary paid to each in accordance with their education and specialized training [...]. It seemed to Ufwa his wife was a new African. (137)

One of the feminist revisionist strategies I pointed out is the writers' representation of women as either existing outside the shackles of patriarchy or attempting to dislocate it. Hanid is trying to change the marriage institution from within, for which she is seen as 'crazy and insane' by her husband. What her husband does not know is that there are other 'crazier' alternatives. One of these alternatives is to exit the institution of marriage. Chachage explores this alternative through Mjuba who is married to Salama, a school teacher. Salama picks quarrels with her husband on a daily basis and the husband has accepted his fate. Salama, however, is a *mlokole*, a born-again Christian, who is taking the Bible too far to the extent of forcing the husband to twist his reports in favour of Christian ideology. To complicate the situation, she also wants her husband to convert to Christianity. When Mjuba swears that he will not convert, she swears never to give him his conjugal rights. The sanction she puts on her husband is almost a replication of Hanid's use of her 'kitchen' to discipline her husband. When he finally walks out of his marriage after three years without having access to his wife's 'bedroom,' it is established that not only has he all along been faithful to his wife, but also finds pride in having been faithful. Sifuni concludes: "Una tofauti [...] na wanaume wengine" (208) [You are different from other men].

Sifuni's idea is that a man who has been treated in that manner is expected to have reacted 'as a man' by being 'unfaithful'. Mjuba, as a new man, has accepted to be a victim of gender humiliation and he is aware that he has been humiliated. First because it was: "Ilikuwa jadi mke ndiye afuate dini ya mume" (191) [it was customary that it was a wife who is expected to follow her husband's religion]. Secondly because: "Kunyimwa unyumba kwa miaka mitatu na kudhalilishwa kijinsia" (139) [Denial of conjugal rights for three years and gender humiliation]. Such an uninspiring portrayal of a husband by a male writer needs to be explained. Could it be that Chachage has chosen to dish out favours to the female characters to the detriment of the male characters? I see this instead as irresistibly part of the reality on the ground that finds its way into the novel and a deliberate technique to revise depicted gender relations accordingly.

The Salama-Mjuba relationship provides an example of a woman who seeks to determine her own destiny. She values freedom and in searching for it, she rejects the norms governing the

traditional husband-wife relationship. Mjuba, the ‘new’ husband, is no longer able to determine what his wife should or should not be, do or have. Salama, the new woman, has many options with regard to marriage: whereas she can choose not to marry, if she does, she has several options for exit. For example, if she finds that her marriage is intolerable, she can devise overt or covert mechanisms to dissolve it. In the traditional society, she has limited or no options of living without the support of her husband. She would put up with an unhappy marriage. She has therefore, managed to overcome one of the most difficult ‘mountains’ delineated by Ogundipe, namely challenging her “own negative self-image”, which results from “centuries of the interiorization of the ideologies of patriarchy and gender hierarchy.” (107).

Salama’s rebellious behaviour towards Mjuba represents the wife’s rebellion against the husband as a common feature in the new era. The second is the female children’s rebellion against their parents. Rosa in *Rosa Mistika* has a new boyfriend. In an unfortunate event, the boyfriend visits Rosa’s home. Unhappy with this visit, Zakaria, her father, rebukes her. What follows after is an uninspiring showdown between the father and the daughter. She retorts: “Kila wakati unatuchunga. Unafikiri utatuo wewe”? (58) [You restrict us all the time. Do you think you will marry us yourself?]. Notably, Rosa is also speaking on behalf of her sisters. As a response to his daughter’s retorting in this way, Zakaria proceeds to disown her: “Tangu leo wewe si mtoto wangu” (58) [From today, you are not my child]. In retaliation, Rosa drops another bombshell: “Tangu leo wewe si baba yangu” (58) [From today you are not my father]. I am not condoning this behaviour; I use it to indicate another dimension of subversion and female characters’ attempts to live outside the confines of patriarchy. What Rosa is pointing to here is that the ‘new’ woman does not stomach conservative parents (such as Zakaria) who are obsessed with the patriarchal past in modern times. In so doing, Rosa transgresses against her father’s authority over her and the traditional patriarchal privileges the father represents.

Chachage’s equation of the post-*Ujamaa* period with both economic and moral corruption accounts for the chaos and conflicts in the narrative, in particular the crises that happen in marriages and love relationships. The depicted socio-economic and cultural opportunities are enabling to some women and men but at the cost of social chaos in both families and general society. For example, we are told that Sifuni was married to Oscar but he chose to get married to another woman after the woman’s father promised him a nice job. A certain unreliability of the narrator is noted in the details he gives about Oscar. He reasons that Oscar’s decision to

leave Sifuni is taken because she does not fit the slot of the traditional woman who stays at home. One cannot avoid questioning how such an anachronistic view of marriage is allowed in this period, let alone by a person as educated as Oscar. Secondly, he claims that it is in fact the job and the money he would get by marrying the minister's daughter that matters most. To prove how anachronistic his perception of Sifuni's job is, it is the same person who, at the end of the novel, is expecting to marry Mjuba's wife who also does not fit his definition of a full-time house-wife.

Oscar's restlessness, like his opportunistic behaviour, is a product of the new period that is based on individualism. Oscar seems to make use of what Wamitila calls *carpe diem* motif which is a Latin short form for *carpe diem quam minimum credula postero*, which he translates as "seize the day, trust tomorrow as little as possible" (81). Oscar embodies this philosophy. Mjuba and Sifuni, as wounded characters, represent the heartlessness of the new era that indicates that both men and women in the new setting are potential victims. They represent what Wamitila calls a *contemptus mundi* motif which means that the new world is a contemptible or bad place. Contradictory as the two motifs may seem, they indicate that the new era represents many challenges and dreams so that while characters wish to turn every day into a festival, the real world betrays them. This is the sense in which the Mjuba-Salama and Sifuni-Oscar relationships are portrayed. The new period is a 'league' in which anyone, irrespective of gender, can initiate; 'lose' or 'win.' The key elements in this 'league' are self-determination, self-awareness and self-analysis.

The free market economy is embedded in the cash-centred life in which even human beings may be commoditised. Like a commodity, they can be sold on the 'free' market. As a result, the southern Tanzania villagers have developed "mila mpya iliyozuka miaka ya mwanzoni mwa themanini" (43) – [a new custom which developed in the eighties] where the old married men are portrayed to be adopting polygynous forms of marriage but with the aim of using their younger wives to exploit other men. The *madaba* custom, as Binti Wenga calls it, is a special arrangement where old men marry two or three young women and allow one of them to have extra-marital relationships with other men in exchange for money. The money that accrues from such relationships is then used to run their families. The other version of this practice is for the parents to allow their unmarried daughters to have relationships with visitors in order to help feed the families. What is particularly disturbing here is the claim that "hayakuwa mahusiano ya kibiashara. Msingi wake ulikuwa ni kujikimu mahitaji ya

kijungujiko. (47) [These were not commercial relationships. The basis was for them to subsist and meet their daily needs.]

The fact that this is seen as a new practice to cope with the precariousness of life in the 1980s is an indication that the post-*Ujamaa* period has not only presented opportunities for the rural people, but it has also challenged their cultural outlook. What is disturbing is the fact that the practice is defended by Binti Wenga as being not a commercial transaction but a livelihood strategy. Not only is sex offered in exchange for money, but it also involves relationships with total strangers and the only thing between the two is sex and money. This is certainly one of the weaknesses, in particular, in the unreliability of Binti Wenga as a female character who throughout the text struggles to fight for women's rights. This unreliability of Binti Wenga in defending an institution, which objectifies women as Mwangi notes in his analysis of the same novel, is a blow to the development of a character who claims to be an eco-feminist. By choosing to be ambivalent about certain traditional inequalities on the one hand and fighting for women's rights on the other, Binti Wenga becomes an 'oxymoron' herself. She is an 'oxymoron' because she sounds both like an educated woman activist in some cases and like a traditional old woman in others. It is only by looking at her as falling between the two extremes that we can see her as a complex character. However, by their readiness to share their younger wives with other men and by allowing their daughters to relate with men as part of family survival, the new era retains some of the old gender inequalities. The *madaba* trend portrays the men in crisis to the extent that they can afford to share their wives with strangers. Secondly, it indicates a situation where one individual commoditises the other.

The two types of commoditisation of the woman through the *madaba* custom (parents turning their daughters into prostitutes or polygynous husbands forcing their younger wives into the same) reveal three types of reversal. First, the parent-child roles and relationships are reversed so that children become providers for their parents. Secondly, wives become providers for their husbands. In both cases, we see that not only is the 'provider' role of the husband and the parent questioned, but even their protective roles are not taken seriously. Thirdly, as Nfah-Abbenyi notes, sexuality is related to polygyny and is subsequently "exploited [and controlled] by economically well-off men" (75). In other words, through the *madaba* custom, women's bodies are controlled by these men for economic reasons. However, the shift here is that while polygyny in the traditional society depicted in chapter two was meant to express the man's ability to provide for his wives, in the depicted free market period, through the *madaba* technique, men become polygynous as a way to benefit economically. Chachage equates the

free market economy with moral corruption such that even the older generations are increasingly becoming loose and husbands and parents in the new period are corrupting their children and not protecting their wives.

The second form is self-commoditisation. Oscar is an ambitious person whose vision of success is measured by money and promotion at work. Oscar leaves Sifuni in favour of a marriage with a daughter of a minister because Sifuni is a busy woman which means she does not fit the orthodoxies of gender relations. By engaging in paid work Sifuni is seen by Oscar as unable to lead a respectable life which in this case implies dependence on a husband's support. As a working woman, Sifuni is portrayed as falling in a category of autonomous women and therefore dangerous to the institution of family. This is what Oscar advances as a justification in the first place but it turns out that his decision is shaped by the money-oriented nature of the society in this period. By turning to the minister's daughter he hopes that the father-in-law will use his influence to get him a job and promote him. It turns out that the minister is not only a Muslim but an *al-hajj* as well⁴³. As a condition for marrying the daughter, Oscar converts to Islam, changes his name to Hassan and gets a job and a wife. The challenge for him is to live as a committed Muslim. When he gets drunk one day, his in-laws are furious and threaten to take their daughter back and use their influence to dismiss him from his job. He finally runs away, leaving his wife and job. The moral lesson is that there is no true love between him and the wife, a feature that defines a prostitute-client relationship or at best a replication of the marriages during the coffee sale seasons in Kindimba Juu in *The Lion of Yola*, the patron-client politics in *The Serpent-Hearted Politician* and the subsequent commoditisation of sexual labour examined in the nationalist economy. This instance connects well with the discussion on Salama forcing her husband to change his faith. It also links up well with the discussion of the objectification of women through the *Madaba* practice. I feel that Oscar has been objectified and valued in terms of money. This is self-objectification. In the face of obsession with money and material success, both men and women stand a chance of being objectified and valued in material terms. Oscar is a 'new' man, a man that is willing to sacrifice his freedom for personal gains. I see this as a strategy by the authors to balance the existing gender stereotypes.

Reading the above portrayals of a 'new' male character against our 'control text' — *Parched Earth* — we see that like Lema who is a female author, the above reviewed male authors also offer a promising portrait of an egalitarian society in which men and women strive to be

⁴³ An *al-hajj* is a person who has been on a pilgrimage to Mecca.

equal. For example, when Doreen meets Joseph she finds that Joseph is a “free man” because unlike her husband, he allows her “to speak her mind contrary to her husband who never allows her to speak her mind” (253). Here Doreen offers us another dimension towards defining a ‘new’ man. For Doreen a ‘new’ man is “free” for he has chosen not to attach himself to patriarchal menus. By reasoning in this way, we are reminded that patriarchy is a web and as Doreen and Joseph believe “even those privileged can become victims” (182). As a ‘new’ man Joseph is striving to be free from the shackles of patriarchy which could victimise him as well. Comparing Joseph with Myombekere (examined in the pre-colonial world of the Kerewe) we see that it is actually the attachment of the latter to the patriarchal socialisation that brutalises him. For example, he himself admits that he is forced to sleep on an empty stomach because the hearth is meant for the woman as

There is no greater shame for a man than for him to have to perform women duties like grinding flour, cooking, picking greens and drawing water. However hungry he might be, he would rather sleep with an empty stomach than face the spectacle of a cooking pot. (18)

Myombekere’s behaviour shows how the socialisation of gender roles informs his life and relationship to his ‘kitchen’. Considering that this is the pre-colonial period, Myombekere cannot be faulted for embracing such gender role distinctions. On the contrary, Joseph as a new man in the latter periods participates in teaching Doreen about the meaning of patriarchy and the “intricacies of love, marriage and the entrenched patriarchy system” (Mwaifuge 256) and the reason why he becomes a “gender sensitive person [...] participat [ing] in cooking, sweeping, washing dishes and clothes, tasks which he did not perform earlier” (ibid 258). Therefore Myombekere as a representative male character in the pre-colonial period is in many ways the opposite of Joseph as a representative character in the later socio-economic periods⁴⁴.

In the new period, acquiring money by any means is depicted as the quickest exit from the poverty inherited from *Ujamaa*. The new Tanzanian is therefore tempted to embrace facile materialism: “ma-Benz, BMW na kila aina ya magari ya spoti” (180) [Benzes, BMW and all kinds of sport cars]. Thus, as in *Thamani ya Ukubwa* and *Wimbi la Huzuni* discussed above, the key philosophy guiding characters’ lives in the new setting is ‘live and let live,’ that is, people are living their lives in the way they want, disregarding what society thinks of them.

⁴⁴ Cf. the ‘Mume Bwege’ song and metaphor discussed in chapter two.

The 'live-and-let-live' approach to life buttresses the theme of individualism. Although individualistic tendencies also feature in the writings spanning the period before the post-*Ujamaa*, the new economic orientation has exacerbated it. In the new era, the emotional function of the family, lover or spouse is being challenged and people are emotionally attached to their jobs, properties, money and other things. This period has produced gender relations that are far more complex than those in the previous temporal settings. This is because the period brings together multiple influences such as traditional, colonial, post-colonial and even global ones. Compared with the previous periods' prevalent gender relations, the relations in this period are fairer and represent a new dawn.

Conclusion

The analysis of the novels reveals an interesting link between the *Ujamaa* and the market economy periods. The failure of *Ujamaa* is portrayed as an incentive for the transition to the market economy. Despite the portrayal of *Ujamaa* as a gender-blind project or "as a patriarchal national development project" (Lal 2) and the mismatch between its principles and practice, the most significant impact is the reduced separation between men and women in production. This is enhanced through the *bega kwa bega*, 'shoulder-to-shoulder' *Ujamaa* approach to work where men and women work side by side. The land allocation policy has also improved women's control and ownership of land, in particular when they are single. On balance, the few improvements that have come as a result of *Ujamaa* vary depending on whether a woman is married or single. The man continues to be privileged in an *Ujamaa* village.

The texts that focus on the post *Ujamaa* period indicate that liberalization has a serious impact on gender relations in the context of Tanzania. It has led to new competition between men and women not only for opportunities but also for space, prestige, a sense of inner value and achievements. The doctrine of individualism is portrayed as key and it is causing a lot of stampede. Unlike the traditional woman, the 'new' woman strives to do well for herself and knows her identity; she seeks to contribute to her society. This woman is educated and has a job, which give her the freedom to express herself and determine her destiny. Because she is new, she elicits new responses from men and her society. Some men choose to ignore her, concede defeat or challenge her. This woman knows how to strike a balance between her social life and her work; her private life and her public one. She knows how to negotiate all these spheres. All these have then improved her self-confidence. Thus, she has the support of

some men and some male writers such as Chachage, Mabala, Msokile, Kagwema, Kezilahabi and Kalindimya, who are analysed in this chapter.

The no-nonsense and hardworking women such as Hawa; the educated and working women like Sifuni, Shamsa, Rinda, Hanid, or Saada, are empowered. They cannot be tossed here and there, the way Matumula does to his wife in *Kwaheri* or kinship does to Bugonoka in *Myombekere* analysed in chapter two. The husband-wife relations have become a fierce, sometimes a violent battle-ground just like the nationalist struggles depicted in chapter four. The women are assertive because of their work. Work for the women in this period is also unique because they work away from home. Secondly, this work is not done for free: they get paid for the work. And the money they get affords them power, independence, freedom and equality. As a result, these women have greater discretion with regard to getting married or not, when, or even how to exit marriage. The relationship between the 'new' man and woman or 'new' husband and wife is a power game typical of a tug-of-war game where either part stands an equal chance of winning or losing. Comparing the portrayal of relations between men and women in this period with those in *Ujamaa*, colonial or pre-colonial periods, the relations in the market economy are more balanced.

Chapter Six: Conclusion: Historifying Gender Relations

This study has examined the representation of gender relations in Tanzanian fiction during the five nation-shaping periods: the pre-colonial, colonial, nationalist, *Ujamaa* and neoliberalism era. The periods also represent the major economic shifts which Tanzania has experienced. The study has analysed how characters' responses to these economic shifts construct, reconstruct, and/or deconstruct gender relations and identities. The analysis shows that, although these periods represent distinct socio-economic shifts, in terms of gender relations and identities they share one enduring motif: patriarchy. Despite the ubiquity of patriarchy in the periods surveyed, the study has demonstrated that patriarchy has been 'mutating' in response to the socio-economic shifts. As a result, patriarchy is portrayed as a dependent variable— a variable that takes on different shapes in different socio-economic periods and produces different gender relations in different contexts. This is because it also takes on different contours depending on how it interacts with identity categories such as gender, race, class, religion, and age. It also plays out differently depending on whether it is in the public or the domestic sphere, at home or at work. This complex and transient character of patriarchy points to the complex, contradictory, and continuously evolving gender relations that characterises the periods surveyed.

In view of the above general observation, two major yet, intersecting themes form the summary of the study. First, the analysis of the representation of the epochs reveals complex shifts in the division of labour, access to and eventual ownership of resources. These shifts lead to changes in characters' socio-economic obligations and expectations. Characters' new obligations and expectations are disruptions that redefine the way men and women relate. Second, the economic and the ideological gender scripts in all the periods cross-fertilize each other, change over time, and interact differently with different identity categories to produce and reproduce various gender relations.

Analysing the representation of the link between the nation's socio-economic shifts and shifts in gender relations was the central goal of the study. The study has offered a period-by-period and step-by-step analysis of the evolution of gender relations in the context of Tanzania as represented in the fiction under review. The periods, the socio-economic shifts, and corresponding gender relations can now be read 'under one roof' and as a 'developing story' that is updated after every major socio-economic shift or even within the same period. This means that gender relations is both a product of history and a historical process itself. The contribution of the study in understanding the representation of gender relations in this regard

is fourfold. First, it facilitates quick comparisons and contrasts of the surveyed periods, their socio-economic contours, and their corresponding gender relations. It also enhances our understanding of the continuities and discontinuities in the socio-economic set-ups and gender relations. It then allows more understanding of how certain socio-economic relations/periods produce certain gender relations on the one hand and how certain gender relations thrive better in certain socio-economic dispensations on the other. Lastly, with this study, it is now possible to locate points in the nation's history where major changes took place in terms of gender relations. Through tracking of the characters' attitudes and their reactions to the periods, it is now possible to see how different periods have been perceived by the characters and how their perceptions have been changing. By addressing them, the study has offered a space for comparing or contrasting the Tanzanian socio-economic and historical experience and gender relations against those of other nations in the region or in the continent.

In terms of methodology, the English-language novels were studied alongside the Swahili-language ones. This has offered a number of insights. First, in so doing the study has contributed to the understanding of the 'marginalized' group of English writers in Tanzania, all for the 'wrong' assumption that any survey of African literature "grants Tanzania a literature in Swahili" (Arnold 949). Second, despite the fact that the Swahili literary tradition dates as far back as the fourteenth century, literary critics who do not know the Swahili language are not able to access its literature. By means of this socio-linguistic dimension, the analysis of the texts contributes to an understanding of the processes of writing in the contexts of Tanzania and demonstrates how the languages colour the writers' depiction of gender relations. Specifically, the study has observed that the process of writing fiction in the context of Tanzania involves a lot of translation and transition, code mixing and code switching. Regardless of whether they write in English or Swahili, the imprint of mother tongue is a glaring fact in many novels. As Ruhumbika notes in his preface to *Village in Uhuru*, some of the Swahili and Kerewe words he uses in his novel are 'untranslatable' and therefore even a glossary does not help. Their meanings, as he believes, are evident once the context in which they are used is understood by the reader. Therefore, the writers incorporate elements from both their indigenous languages and Swahili thus providing a typical triglossic situation in their texts. What is still not known and therefore requires more research is whether the triglossic situation is a result of linguistic incompetence of the authors, language limitations, or the authors' sociological biases in wanting to convey certain Tanzanian cultural sensibilities. It is further recommended that in order to adequately capture the differences and similarities in the way Swahili and English languages are used by writers to convey

Tanzanian cultural specifics including gender relations, future studies will have to focus on translated works and compare or contrast their portrayal of gender relations. A quick example can be drawn from Kitereza's *Bwana Myombekere* (1982) which has been translated into English as *Mr. Myombekere* (2002). In the Swahili version, a husband is referred to as 'bwana' or 'mume'. In the English version, *bwana* is simply translated as 'master' which already indicates the power relations between the husband as dominant and the wife as subordinate. As a Swahili speaker, one understands that *bwana* could also be used to mean master, but it does not carry the same power-laden meaning as 'master' does in English which Ruhumbika uses in his English translation of *Bwana Myombekere*. Approaching texts in this way would open another route along which a more informed investigation of the portrayal of gender relations may be done.

The study reiterates the use of fiction for systematic study of fictionalised history and economics and how both bear on gender relations as the novels have represented them. By centralizing socio-economic and historical processes, the study analysed the shifts in gender relations as a process. If we are to perceive the historical periods and economic shifts examined as symbolic of the journey of the character in search of equality or as the portrayal of patriarchy in transition, the plight of both female and male characters can be used to summarize the evolution as follows. In the first two periods (pre-colonial and colonial), gender relations are notoriously unequal. The endings of the fiction surveyed in this period indicate this challenge. Isamba in *Kwaheri* ends her life by committing suicide — a sign that she is resisting patriarchal kinship and giving up her struggle against it. Bugonoka in *Myombekere* is widowed, sexually cleansed and her own son overtakes her and becomes the head of the family; he marries off his sister without consulting either the mother or the sister. The colonial period depicts similar pessimism: Kamuyuga's success as a businessman means that he can now add another wife to his household. As a wealthy woman, his wife resorts to living like Indian women do, totally enclosed in the backyard of their home. In *Kuli*, Mashavu spends most of her life as a fulltime wife and when she goes public, she is failed by the racialized and classed colonial society. In both periods, despite the female characters' attempts to challenge the traditional and colonial patriarchies, they are not developed to the extent that they successfully flog patriarchies to the end. There is a very limited cause for optimism in gender relations in these two phases. The analysis of gendered labour in the nationalist period indicates that understanding the portrayal of characters' labour is important in shedding light on the statuses of men and women in Tanzanian societies under colonialism. The study finds that the novels set during period present new possibilities and optimism in

terms of gender relations. In *The Serpent-Hearted Politician*, the women become the pillar that keeps Sanya's male-led nationalist struggle from collapsing. The Sanyan nationalist struggle is theirs; they can either fail it or sustain it. In *Vuta n'kuvute*, Yasmin begins to challenge patriarchy at home and goes public to denounce it. When she marries the man she loves, she symbolizes a new era where class and racial tensions are challenged and where young men and women can decide whom they want to marry. The novel also portrays ordinary women as motivated actors taking part in the male-led nationalist politics. In the *Ujamaa* period, the reduced separation between men and women's labour enhanced through the *bega kwa bega* [shoulder to shoulder] agricultural systems depicted in *The Lion of Yola* is one of the pockets of hope that the period represents. The post-*Ujamaa* period depicted in *Makuadi wa Soko Huria* indicates that more socio-economic opportunities now exist for the woman.

An intersectional approach has been very useful in analysing gender relations. The study has found that different historical epochs are characterized by the predominance of particular intersections. That is, particular socio-economic orientations call for particular or distinct intersections. As a consequence of this, particular intersections are more articulate in certain socio-economic periods than in others. In light of this observation, the study has revealed the following trend: in the depicted pre-colonial period it is the intersection between gender and class and invariably age that shapes relations among characters. In addition to the state-sponsored racism and introduction of new religion, class in the depicted colonial period significantly shapes gender relations. The workings of the often neglected intersection between gender and age are captured in the characters' lives in this period. Disability as another neglected variable that variously intersects with gender to produce different gender relations is highlighted. It has noted specifically that the female characters' infertility as a form of socio-economic disability is portrayed as shaping relations not only among the couples but also in terms of the infertile woman's relation to her society. In her old age, it is not so much her ability or inability to produce children that defines relations, but her gender and age. What is striking here is that age and gender take on different contours across the life course of the character. In the pre-colonial period examined in chapter two, a character's gender takes precedence in inter-gender relations, whereas age or seniority takes precedence in defining intra-gender relations. Highlighting all these, the study has also allowed an understanding of other subtle factors such as one's position in the kinship hierarchy as an important element of gender relations. By relating intersectionality issues to men and how

they bear on them as producers and reproducers of gender relations, the study has extended the application of the framework to studying men.

The notion of social values as defining characters' desires and goals; what is good and what is wrong; respectable behaviour and unrespectable forms; and overall societal norms and expectations, form the 'knot' in gender relations across the periods surveyed. The problematic is what constitutes social values. The study generally finds that the characters' perceptions of social values differ not only from men to women but also among men and among women. Specifically, it has noted that in the depicted pre-colonial period marriage is a requirement for achievement of adult status. However, in the other periods, different men and women attach different meanings and importance to the same institution. Whereas marriage in the pre-colonial society is requires child-bearing, in the depicted 'free market' it is portrayed to be based on affection and money. Whereas child-bearing is necessary for economic gains and is equated to wealth in the depicted traditional society, in the 'free market' economy characters are increasingly restraining themselves from having many children because many children are seen as socio-economic burdens. Marriage and wifehood or motherhood are no longer seen by characters in this period as the main careers for the woman.

The majority of gender studies in the context of Tanzania generally emphasize the stereotypes of male domination and female subordination. They see male domination and female subordination as legitimized through the various institutions of patriarchy. Some of the stereotypes and equations have been discussed in this study as well. The study, however, challenges some of the equations and conclusions. Firstly, through tracking the economic shifts and gender relations across history, it is observed that some stereotypes and equations can be misleading. This is because such equations defy the heterogeneity of men and women and complexity of historical processes. Secondly, in fact, even the stereotypes/equations in the depicted Tanzanian context have changed with economic shifts. For example, the polygynous husband in the depicted free market period who 'pimps' for one of his wives as a livelihood strategy would have attracted the wrath of a society in the depicted pre-colonial period. In the same way, the women who are comfortable with one or two children in the depicted market economy period would have been objects of stigma in the depicted pre-colonial society where high progeny matters. A migrant husband who leaves his family for eight years as Kamuyuga does in colonial Anyalungu would certainly be stigmatized and not be hailed in the pre-colonial period. The implication of all these is that, respectability as an aspect of gender relations has also mutated. While in the pre-colonial social economy fertility determined a

woman's respect in society, it is money that in the free market economy context that is portrayed as determining (among other things) a character's respectability, regardless of gender.

One of the most frequently recurring gaps in gender studies, my review shows, has been the analysis of the representation of the private and the public spheres as separate categories. The limitation of such an approach is that it tends to push the woman into seclusion or private sphere. Confining her to the private sphere means that her labour contribution to the national public is not adequately accounted for. Delineating the representation of the labour of the illiterate and of women often considered town prostitutes to the nationalist labour pool is one intervention this study has made. First, it has offered a way of looking at an ordinary woman as a necessary part of the nationalist project, a person who makes important contributions. Second, it has examined both the ordinary and extra-ordinary ways through which women participate in the national politics. Attending political rallies, ululating, clapping hands, dancing and singing, and other similar ordinary ways have all been given political value. They all increase the political fortunes of the political parties of the nationalist movements they support. This is made possible not only by collapsing the spheres or analysing them as porous, but also in seeing them as being criss-crossed by both men and women.

The study cautiously proposes that a new way of looking at some of the patriarchal institutions needs to be adopted. Caution is emphasized here because taken superficially, the observation may raise eye-brows. This is because the study does not intend to defend the institutions, but to summarize the characters' perceptions about them and how they are represented. What the study argues is that the 'story' of the 'negatives' about the so called patriarchal institutions is already a familiar one. A new perspective on this 'story' is proposed by this study. Some of the practices/institutions help to improve the woman's bargaining abilities just as they do for the man. One of these is the practice of bridewealth payment which in chapter two was analysed as enhancing checks and balances. Looking at the representation of female prostitutes as some form of 'soft-pornography' hampers our understanding of the politics of sex work as a mask for political interventions in anti-colonial struggles.

Most studies of gender consider socialization, both familial and societal, as a central factor in shaping gender relations. After analysing the texts and periods, the study invites researchers to rethink the precedence of the society over the individual. The analysis has shown that taking this precedence as a 'constant' limits us in accounting for individualized behaviours. There is

need to give room for individual self-socialized acts or behaviour that shape relations. In so doing, the study has also questioned the equation of certain practices such as *purdah* with gender oppression, especially when it is self-chosen. We have problematized the difference between self-inflicted *purdah* in *The Gathering Storm* and *Kuli* and society-enforced *purdah* in *Utengano*.

In summary, the study specifically observes the following issues in relation to the depiction of gender relations:

Firstly, gender relations in the traditional society are largely shaped by patriarchal kinship practices which regulate the entire society in the pre-colonial period. Compared to the other periods, gender relations are notoriously unequal in this period.

Secondly, in the other eras (colonial, nationalist, *Ujamaa* and post *Ujamaa*), in addition to gender relations being shaped by patriarchy, the state (both the colonial and the post-independence state policies) is portrayed as being the major factor that shapes gender relations.

Thirdly, within the same epoch there are other ‘points of destabilization’ which continuously reposition gender relations. This is evident in novels which organize their storylines around two or more generations such as *Vuta n’kuvute*. The houseboy represented in *The Gathering Storm* whose professional life embodies colonial state-supported racism is a master in his home even as he is a servile black person at his place of work.

Fourthly, due to endless borrowing and interaction between the pre-colonial, colonial and *Ujamaa* periods, there is no radical change in gender relations. The period that despite borrowing from previous ones indicates the most radical break, is the ‘free market’ economy. Gender antagonism reflected in the aggressive relations between men and women is more pronounced in this period than in others. The analysis attributes this trend to one factor in the lives of characters: the socio-economic change entailed in this period seems to erode more of the men’s power while significantly increasing that of women. Because of this, we can draw a ‘balance sheet’ of the costs and benefits of the shifts regarding men and women from the pre-colonial to the free market era. The ‘balance sheet’ suggests that patriarchy is increasingly facing a crisis. As the Area Commissioner in *Village in Uhuru* testifies, even the patriarchal institutions such as polygynous homes are in decline. Additionally, due to increasing socio-economic opportunities, the man is no longer able to protect the patriarchal dividend, while

the woman is able to challenge that and even access similar opportunities, previously denied her.

Lastly, the study has demonstrated that gender relations, in all the temporal settings, are about restoration of the past and or transformation of the existing gender relations. The restoration-transformation duality also characterizes the character's lives and relations. Oxymoron is therefore the hallmark of gender relations in all the surveyed periods.

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